

JVA assistant chief killed by disgruntled employee

AMMAN (J.T.) — Mohammad Habashneh, the assistant to the secretary general of the Jordan Valley Authority, was shot dead in his office in the Jordan Valley on Saturday morning by a disgruntled employee. Habashneh, 48, was reportedly sitting in his office in Deir Alla, when Mohammad Abed, 42, a technician walked in the office "drew a gun and shot him several times in the chest," official sources said. Abed then turned himself in to police, and Habashneh was rushed to a nearby hospital but was declared dead on arrival. Habashneh is survived by his wife and six children. In the early 1980s, a similar incident occurred in the Jordan Valley Authority North Shouneh office, when a citizen shot Munther Haddadin, who was then the secretary general at the authority, over a dispute over land.

Jordan Times

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UNSCOM monitors prepare to leave Baghdad on Saturday after Baghdad announced Oct. 31 it was halting cooperation with United Nations monitors until the Security Council reviewed sanctions imposed over Iraq's 1990-1991 occupation of Kuwait. Senior U.S., French and British officials meet in Paris on Saturday to discuss a response to Iraq's refusal to cooperate with the U.N. weapons monitors (Reuters photo)

Iraq shrugs off U.S. warnings, UNSCOM pulls out inspectors

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq on Saturday shrugged off threats of attack as U.S. President Bill Clinton warned that American forces in the Gulf are ready for action and U.N. arms inspectors started to scale back their Baghdad staff.

Babel, a newspaper run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, said "the threats of enemies and tours by the U.S. defence secretary (William Cohen) will not sway Iraq" on its decision to break with the U.N. inspectors.

"Although we don't want a military confrontation, it is welcome if it is imposed on us," it said, adding that Iraq had the backing of fellow Arab countries which rejected the military option.

Despite U.N. Security Council condemnation, "the leadership and courageous people of Iraq will not go back on their decision just to please the American tyrant," said another official daily, Al Iraq.

U.S. President Bill Clinton warned Friday that U.S. forces

deployed in the Gulf are capable of launching "swift, powerful strikes" against Iraq if necessary to force it to comply with all U.N. resolutions.

"The United States and allied forces now in the theatre are prepared to deal with all contingencies," he said in his bluntest warning since Iraq's Oct. 31 break with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) for disarmament.

But the Baghdad newspaper Al-Jumhuriya said Iraq was "no longer afraid of America and its oppression" and would not bow in the face of military threats.

UNSCOM started on Saturday to withdraw its arms inspectors left idle by Baghdad's decision to halt cooperation.

"The team leaving today is made up of 15 experts, including four resident monitors, and a ballistic team who came when everything happened, and other visitors," said the spokeswoman of the U.N. arms monitoring centre in Baghdad.

Caroline Cross told AFP the

scaling down would affect a total of 26 UNSCOM members, due to head out by Wednesday, leaving behind some 100 other staff. It was a "purely administrative and logistical" move.

"The staff remaining has full capacity to carry out inspections when cooperation resumes," she said.

UNSCOM has been confined to a network of cameras and sensors, installed at Iraqi military and industrial sites and hooked up to the monitoring centre, to check possible illegal weapons activity.

Baghdad newspapers also Saturday renewed Iraq's demand for moves toward lifting the U.N. oil embargo in force since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The Security Council resolution calls for lifting the oil embargo once Iraq has met its obligations to eliminate weapons of mass destruction as laid down under the ceasefire terms of the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait.

On Thursday, the council unanimously condemned Baghdad's decision to break with UNSCOM.

But its resolution 1205 did not threaten military action and the council was split over the issue of paragraph 22 and the oil embargo. Washington rejected French and Chinese calls for a specific reference to paragraph 22.

France, China and Russia, in contrast, stressed that the 15-member Security Council had an obligation to lift the embargo once Iraq had complied with council requirements.

Iraq says that it no longer holds any weapons of mass destruction.

As part of efforts to build a consensus against Iraq, Britain's Defence Secretary George Robertson is due in Kuwait on Sunday at the start of a series of visits to the Gulf by British officials in the footsteps of Cohen.

Gulf states, notably Saudi Arabia, have so far opposed the use of force against Iraq.

Islamic Jihad claims responsibility for suicide bombing in Jerusalem market

SILAT AL HARITHIYA (AP) — The activist group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility Saturday for the suicide bombing of a crowded Jerusalem market and vowed more attacks to try to block the new peace accord.

"This heroic operation is not the first and not going to be the last," the group said in a leaflet faxed to news organizations. "We refuse any political agreement that would recognise the Zionist enemy."

The leaflet could not immediately be authenticated, but its style was consistent with that of past communications from the group.

An Islamic Jihad official in Damascus confirmed that the group's leader Ramadan Abdullah Shallah claimed responsibility for Friday's bombing in an interview with the Paris-based Radio Monte Carlo.

Palestinian security sources and the families of the dead bombers had already identified them as Islamic Jihad activists.

At least half a dozen other Islamists have been rounded up since the bombing, the sources said.

Meanwhile, Palestinian political leaders said Israel should not use Friday's suicide bombing, which killed the two assailants and wounded 21 Israelis, as an excuse to stop the peace process.

One of Israel's key demands is that the Palestinians do more to fight attacks by Islamists against Israeli targets.

The Palestinians, however, said the two bombers had come from Israeli-controlled areas, so Israel bore at least part of the security responsibility for Friday's attack.

Hours after the bombing at Jerusalem's open-air Mahane Yehuda market, Israel suspended cabinet debate on ratification of the 2-week-old Wye River accord and did not announce a date for resumption.

One lived near the Anata refugee camp, north of Jerusalem, and the other lived in the West Bank village of Silat Al Harithiya, outside the town of Jenin.

Both were killed when their car blew up at the entrance to Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market. Israeli authorities reportedly found suitcases in the wreckage, suggesting the pair had intended to hand-carry bombs into the crowded market and detonate them there.

Their families said the two had met in Israeli jails and were related by marriage. Both families held so-called mourning houses on Saturday, but not actual funerals, since Israeli authorities still have their bodies.

"I didn't raise him to lose him like that," said Mohammad Zughayar, the 54-year-old father of Yousef Ali Mohammad Zughayar, 22. "I'm proud, but I'm sad because I loved my son."

The family of Suleiman Musa Tahaynah, 24, said he had been married for three months to Zughayar's sister, Basma. They met when she was visiting her brother, who was in prison with Dahayneh, the family said.

Dahayneh had been angry and embittered since losing part of his leg after being shot during a clash with Israeli troops when he was 13, his relatives said.

His wife showed visitors a letter she said he had written to her before the attack, saying, "Not the Wye agreement, not the Palestinian Authority, or the Israeli government, or even Clinton, will stop me from meeting my God. If they can, let them stop me."

Palestinian Cabinet Minister Nabil Shaath sharply criticised Israel Saturday for suspending action on the accord in response to the bombing.

"This Israeli government is as guilty as those who want to destroy the peace process with acts of violence," Shaath said in Cairo. "The Israeli government seems happy to continue procrastinating."

The Palestinian cabinet condemned the attack following its own meeting on Friday night, but also said it should not be used as a pretext for delaying implementation of the accord.

Arab summit necessary if Wye not implemented — Mubarak

CAIRO (AFP) — An Arab summit would become "necessary" if Israel fails to implement the Wye River accord on troop pullouts from the West Bank, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Saturday.

"There are permanent consultations between Arab leaders and they are waiting for the results of the latest agreement struck between Israel and the Palestinian Authority," Mubarak told a conference of African journalists here.

"If the Palestinians hit a dead end, it will become necessary to convene an Arab summit," Mubarak said.

Such a meeting would be asked to take a "binding decision," he said without elaborating.

Earlier Mubarak urged Israel not to let the "enemies of peace" sabotage the Wye accord.

"I say to Israelis that the

solution is in the continuation of the peace process and that requires courage to meet the challenges ahead," he told the government daily Al-Gumhuriya.

"Explosions can happen everywhere and we must not give enemies of peace the opportunity (to sabotage the accord)," Mubarak said, warning that acts of violence would multiply if the accord is not implemented.

Israel on Friday shelved plans for the ratification of the agreement after bombs exploded in a Jerusalem market killing the two attackers and injuring 24 Israelis.

The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack.

Mubarak told Al-Gumhuriya that "almost no-one" trusted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to implement the accord, which was signed a little over two weeks ago in Washington.

"If you (Netanyahu) want to change this image, you have no other choice but to start implementing the accord," he said.

Meanwhile, the Arab League urged Israel to ratify the Wye River agreement despite Friday's bombing.

"We shouldn't let such attacks stop the peace process and the implementation of the Wye River agreement, otherwise extremists will win in their endeavour to foil the peace process," Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid told reporters.

"The agreement is an important step which should not be wasted," Abdul Meguid said.

The Arab leader denounced the bloodshed of innocent victims but also accused the Israeli government of using such incidents to justify delays in implementing the Wye River accord.

Suleiman Arar dies in Cairo of heart failure at age of 64

AMMAN (J.T.) — Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Suleiman Arar, best remembered for his commitment to the principles of democracy and freedoms, passed away on Saturday, aged 64, due to heart failure.

Arar, who was chairman of the General Secretariat of Arab Political Parties and leader of the pan-Arabist Al-Mustaqbal Party, which he founded in 1992, also represented his hometown Ma'an in the Lower House and was elected to the Lower House Speakership in 1989.

His political work, always characterised by utmost integrity and dedication, took him to the frontline in many civil rights campaigns. He pioneered on the difficult path of democratic reforms, campaigning for the legalisation of political parties and the launch of political pluralism, as well as the recognition of press and other freedoms.

Born in 1934, Arar graduated in law from the University of Alexandria and



served in the Foreign Ministry at home and abroad. Among the government and non-government posts which he held in the early stages of his career were those of Kerak assistant governor, director general of the unions, chief editor and chairman of the board at the Arabic daily Al-Rai, as well as president of the Jordan Press Association. Arar was appointed as interior minister in the 1984 coalition of Mudar Badran, served as minister of state in the 1979 gov-

ernment of the late Abdul Hamid Sharaf, as agriculture minister in 1980, and as deputy prime minister and minister of interior in the 1984 government of Ahmad Obeidat.

More recently, Arar was one of the main pillars of the Higher Committee for Coordination Among the Opposition Parties, which declared the boycott of the last elections in protest against what it termed as "a successive erosion of parliamentary authority."

Later, Arar multiplied his calls for more freedoms and his appeals against corruption, which he described as one of the worst illnesses of society. Arar was also an untiring advocate of the Palestinian cause.

Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh yesterday expressed deep sorrow for the loss of this great politician.

Arar's body was expected to be flown to Amman last night from Cairo, where the statesman was on a private visit, and to be laid to rest today.

Two Israelis detained in Cyprus for spying

LARNACA (AP) — Police on Saturday arrested two Israeli men on suspicion of spying, and a court ordered them detained for eight days pending investigations.

The two were produced in the Larnaca district court hours after police raided and searched their apartment near an army camp shortly after midnight in the village of Ziyi near the south coastal town of Larnaca.

Sgt. Kyriakos Kyriacou, the police lawyer for Larnaca district, told the court that an investigation is being conducted against the two for spying against the Cypriot army.

He said police found in their apartment "documents which may constitute the crime of spying." He did not elaborate.

A police official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the two

men are suspected of spying for Israel on behalf of Turkey. The two countries have a military alliance.

Justice Minister Nikos Koshis was also quoted by Cyprus state radio as saying that it should not be assumed they were spying for Israel.

This was seen as an inference that spying, if any, might be for Turkey, which has occupied the northern third of the island since a 1974 invasion in the wake of an abortive coup by supporters of union with Greece.

Kyriacou said police found cameras, wireless instruments, a tape recorder with tapes of conversations in Greek between police patrol cars and tourist maps in the apartment. Also confiscated were radio scanners, which are banned in Cyprus, he said.

The two men were identified as Udi Hargov, 27 and Igal Damary, 49. They will appear in court again on Nov. 16 when either formal charges will be filed or the prosecution might ask for further remand.

Kyriacou said the pair arrived in Cyprus Friday. They had also visited Cyprus and stayed in Ziyi between Oct. 15 and Oct. 22 when the army was conducting its annual exercise nearby.

The two men were under surveillance, he said. The arrest came only three days after Israeli President Ezer Weizman ended a three-day visit to the island this week. The visit, the first by an Israeli president, was hailed as ushering in a new era in the lukewarm relations between the two countries.

The visit was nevertheless overshadowed by repeated expressions of concern by President Glafcos Clerides over Israel's military cooperation agreement with Turkey.

Weizman said before leaving he was sorry he had not succeeded in persuading the Greek Cypriots that Israel's cooperation with Turkey was not directed against Cyprus or any other party.

Once a hotbed of Arab-Israeli espionage, spying activity has been muted recently in Cyprus.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Cyprus was a listening post for the intelligence agents of Israel as well as the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which was based in Lebanon, a half-hour flight from this Mediterranean island.

Israel bombs Hizbollah sites in south Lebanon

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli air force bombed suspected Hizbollah guerrilla targets Saturday in the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in southern Lebanon, a military spokesman said here.

"Our planes launched a raid Saturday on targets in the western sector of southern Lebanon. The bombings were extremely precise and our planes returned to their bases without suffering any damage," he said.

Lebanese police confirmed the raid, saying that two fighter jets fired two missiles on the zone at 5:30 p.m. (1530 GMT). There was no immediate word on casualties.

The attack came after the Hizbollah militia claimed an attack on an Israeli

army position in Blat, in the western sector of the security zone.

On Friday the Israeli army arrested 17 Lebanese in the security zone, including six members of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA), Lebanese police said, adding that they have been charged with collaborating with Lebanese security forces against Israel.

About 40 Israeli soldiers, backed by military vehicles and police dogs, raided the Christian Maronite village of Qlayaa in the eastern sector of the border enclave at dawn to make the arrests, it was reported.

Hizbollah spearheads the campaign to end Israel's 20-year occupation of southern Lebanon.

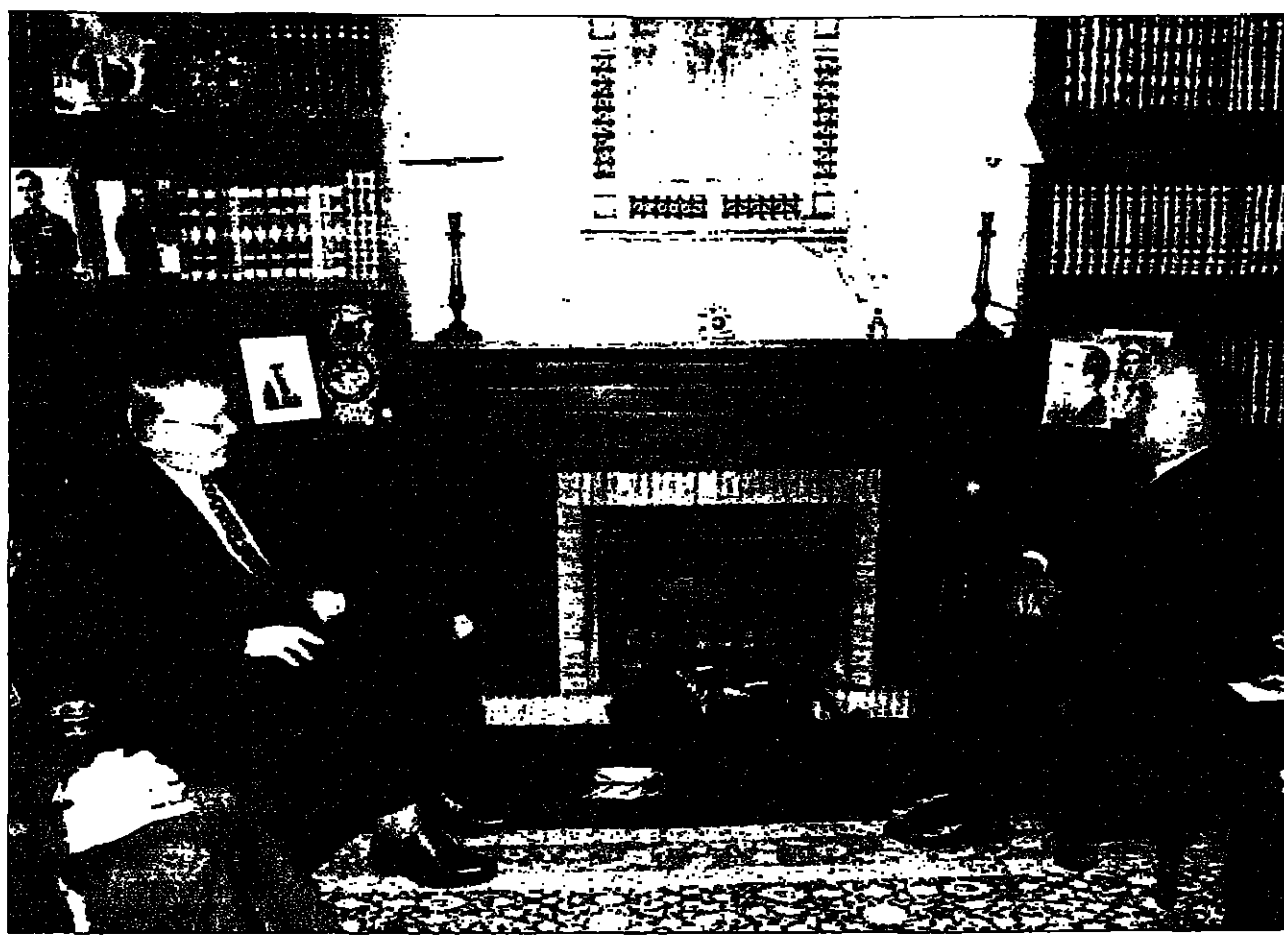
Princess Basma returns from UNESCO meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma returned Saturday to Amman from Paris, where she took part in a two-day meeting of the scientific committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor appointed Princess Basma as a member to the committee last month in recognition of her efforts in the field of human resources development at the national, regional and international levels.

UNESCO entrusted the committee with providing advice and counsel to the organisation about the material in its world cultural reports, which are published twice per year.

The decision to publish the reports follow recommendations by the UNESCO commission on culture and development. The reports review trends in world cultural development, shed light on cultural policies and present ideas to contribute to further promoting world culture.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, holds talks with the visiting Czech delegation Saturday at the Royal Court (Photo by Boghos)

Regent, Czech parliamentary delegation discuss promoting bilateral relations

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, conferred Saturday at the Royal Court with a parliamentary delegation from the Czech Republic led by Senate Speaker Frantisek Vizek.

During the meeting, which was attended by Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai and Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani, the two sides discussed means of promoting bilateral relations

and the latest developments in the peace process as well as regional and international issues and questions of common concern to Jordan and the Czech Republic.

The Regent called for promoting cooperation and strengthening cultural links between the two countries as well as developing dialogue to further relations.

Czech parliament's human rights, culture, education and science committee, said his country would like to bolster ties with Jordan and expressed appreciation of Jordan's role in promoting stability and peace in the region.

Earlier Saturday, the Czech delegation members, who were scheduled to leave Jordan on Sunday, visited the Arab Thought Forum and met with its

secretary general, Ali Atiqah, who outlined the forum's development and programmes.

The forum, which was established in 1981 by Prince Hassan, has published 70 books and organised 130 regional and international meetings mainly focusing on culture.

The delegation also visited two schools in the Amman governorate.

Opposition committee announces its agenda for national dialogue

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The opposition on Saturday listed normalisation with Israel, the press and elections laws and democratisation as well as economic and inter-Arab policies as the issues it intends to tackle in the national dialogue with the government.

In an eight-page memorandum released at a press conference yesterday, the Higher Committee for Coordination Among Opposition Parties stressed that the dialogue sought by the government must be open in order to represent an opportunity for real democratic growth.

Leaders of the 13 opposition groups represented by the Higher Committee also said they will not take part in the dialogue separately but as a whole.

The opposition parties' memorandum came three weeks after the government held its first meeting with leaders of the country's 13 professional associations, launching a much-awaited national dialogue expected to resolve a long-standing strain in relations which peaked with the opposition's boycott of last November's general elections.

The national dialogue, for which the government has created a special min-

isterial committee, falls under the tasks specifically entrusted to Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh in the Royal letter of designation.

Although generally pleased with the government's initiative, opposition leaders yesterday expressed fears of being side-lined, especially if pro-government parties are invited to take part in the dialogue.

"We do believe that the government is serious about the national dialogue, at least right now," said Deputy Mohammad Ouran (Tafleh), secretary general of the leftist Arab Land Party.

"But it has to be clear that since any problems are between the government and us, the dialogue must be between the government and us and nobody else," Ouran told the Jordan Times on the sidelines of yesterday's press conference.

A meeting between the government and opposition parties, however, is not expected to take place in the next few weeks.

Sources noted that the government will spend the rest of this month preparing for the convening of a brief special session of Parliament to discuss His Majesty King Hussein's absence from the country in accordance with the Constitution, as well as the

start of Parliament's ordinary session towards the end of November.

The opposition's memorandum states that the country is facing a serious economic, social, and political crisis resulting from a widening rift between government policies and the people's needs and aspirations, as well as a low ceiling of public freedoms.

The opposition, which has spearheaded a fierce campaign against the one-person, one-vote electoral system introduced in 1993 on the grounds that it encourages tribalism, also asked the government to be included in the debate over the law to govern the 2001 parliamentary elections.

The Islamist-led group of 13 parties has long opposed the country's IMF-sponsored economic restructuring programme, saying that the lifting of state subsidies will have a disproportionate effect on the lower strata of the population and that the privatisation process will aggravate the soaring unemployment rate.

The Higher Committee's memorandum also demanded that the government strengthen ties with other Arab states, which the opposition says have been suffering from the country's siding with Israel and Western powers.

Shoman Foundation honours young Arab researchers, scholars

IRBID (Petra) — The Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation Saturday honoured a group of young scholars and scientific researchers from Jordan and the Arab World for outstanding achievement at a ceremony held at Yarmouk University.

The awards were presented by Abdul Majid Shoman, chairperson of the foundation's board of directors.

The scholars below received awards in the following categories yesterday: physics and geology, Nahir Buzarneh from Algeria and Nizar Jaber from Jordan; legal and administrative sciences, Ali Khattar from Jordan; economic, financial and banking research, Walid Hmaidat from Jordan; educational and psychological work, Hisham Abdullah from Egypt and Abdul Nasser Qaddour from Palestine; engineering sciences, Hashem Masaeed from Jordan; chemistry, Tareq Madkour from Egypt and Taleb Tal from Palestine; social sciences, Kaltham Ghanem from Qatar and Hassan Quraful from Morocco; mathematics, Al Akhdar Ben Kahrout from Algeria and Suheil Khouri from Jordan; biological sciences, Mukhtar Hamed from Tunisia; medical sciences, Mohammad Qattan from Saudi Arabia; and humanities, Musa Rbaba

from Jordan.

The award for agricultural sciences was not presented because no competitor presented a significant work judged worthy of the award.

In an address at the ceremony, Shoman said the awards are meant to encourage young scholars from the Arab World to conduct research for the benefit of Arab society.

The foundation and deans at Jordanian universities are currently revising scientific research programmes in order to modernise them and give impetus to scholarly endeavours, Shoman said.

According to Anwar Baikihi, president of Al Hasbaniyah University in Zarqa and a member of the committee that judged the participants' work, a total of 127 researchers from Jordan and other Arab states competed for the awards. Hashem Masaeed from Jordan, chemistry, Tareq Madkour from Egypt and Taleb Tal from Palestine; social sciences, Kaltham Ghanem from Qatar and Hassan Quraful from Morocco; mathematics, Al Akhdar Ben Kahrout from Algeria and Suheil Khouri from Jordan; biological sciences, Mukhtar Hamed from Tunisia; medical sciences, Mohammad Qattan from Saudi Arabia; and humanities, Musa Rbaba

from Jordan. The foundation also opened a public library in Amman in 1986 which serves nearly 180,000 patrons annually and another in Tafleh in cooperation with the municipality.

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PRINCE FAISAL ATTENDS CABINET SESSION: HRH Prince Faisal on Saturday attends part of a regular Cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh. The session was devoted to traffic-related problems and solutions (Petra photo)

Paralysed man on hunger strike to press for improved care

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — Nabil Shrouf, 20, has been on a hunger strike for a week, threatening to take his own life. Paralysed from neck down and placed in senior citizens' home, he feels that he is entitled to receive treatment at an appropriate rehabilitation centre, just like any other citizen.

Almost one year ago, he was involved in a car accident, which left him permanently disabled.

He was admitted to a specialised rehabilitation centre at the army-run Royal Medical Services, where he received physiotherapy and treatment for eight months.

But because officials at the rehabilitation centre said the facility does not offer lifetime residence, Nabil was placed temporarily in Al Hussein Society for the Physically Challenged.

"My situation is very difficult. I was placed in the society for a week and then I was transferred to an old people's home because I needed a nurse and a special bed," Nabil told the

Jordan Times in an interview.

The World Health Organisation estimates that the number of those suffering from disabilities is nearly 10 per cent of the population, or around 400,000 Jordanians.

Over the last few years, Jordan has made advances in accommodating the disabled and has introduced legislation to this effect.

A 1993 law granted disabled people rights in terms of their integration into society, including education, medical treatment, employment and a suitable environment that allows them freedom of movement.

Nisreen Najdawi, director of special education at the Ministry of Social Development, said she believed that physically disabled people, especially like Nabil, should be offered services from the family.

"[When] physically disabled patients are placed with their families... it is psychologically better for them," Najdawi said, stressing that the ministry

provides care for them through a society rehabilitation programme.

"We teach mothers how to deal with their disabled children," Najdawi said, adding that the ministry also disburses monthly allowances.

But, she said, "there are no centres in the Kingdom that provide care for older patients that are physically disabled."

Having divorced parents and a jailed father, Nabil has no place to go.

There are only three governmental centres for the severely disabled (including mental disabilities) and one state-run facility for the physically disabled, which receives cases up to the age of 12, according to Najdawi.

Last week, Mohammad Kheir Mamsar, minister of social development, placed Nabil in a senior citizens' home, "Dar Al Diyafa," in Juweideh, a southern neighbourhood of Amman.

But the young man, depressed by the move, feels that such a facility is not the right place for him and wants to return to the

first rehabilitation centre he stayed in for further treatment.

Nabil said that at his current residence, there is only one nurse, who is too busy to attend to his needs.

"I want to return to the medical centre, because I need physiotherapy and homeopathic treatment, or to Al Hussein Society, where patients receive occupational therapy," Nabil said.

Mamsar said Nabil has been severely depressed and has tried to commit suicide on several occasions.

"He was supposed to be placed at a centre for the severely disabled in Jerash, where there are up to 40 severely disabled patients, but he refused," Mamsar said.

Nabil insisted that the Jerash centre does not suit him because the patients there suffer from mental disabilities.

"So we transferred him to Dar Al Diyafa because it is supervised by doctors and we assigned him two nurses to attend to his needs round the clock," the min-

ister said.

"But Nabil insists on returning to the rehabilitation centre," the minister said, adding that it provides treatment only and does not offer life-time residence.

He added that Al Hussein Society is not an appropriate place for Nabil because it receives mostly school-age patients.

"Being disabled and rejected by his family, his has become a humanitarian case," he added.

Mamsar said that he wants to visit Nabil and that he was willing to rent a house for him and assign him a nurse if this would make him feel better. Be he

noted that this is not the ministry's job.

"His problem is that he is severely depressed and he doesn't know what he wants," Mamsar said.

When the Jordan Times contacted Nabil on Friday morning, he said his situation was getting worse and insisted that he be transferred to a suitable place.

The Ministry of Social Development spends JD2.5 million on 144 centres, including schools and rehabilitation centres, which provide services and facilities to people suffering from various kinds of disabilities, such as loss of sight and hearing impairment.

what's going on

ATLM

* "Thérèse" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman on Monday Nov. 9 at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Abu Aziz at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 28.

* A three-dimensional exhibition on canvas by Susanna Caldwell, Darleen Karpowicz, and Rawabi Abu Ghazaleh Silawi at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre (Artisanat), Jabal Amman, off the second circle, until Nov. 10 (Telefax 4647858).

* Exhibition of works by Palestinian artist Kamal Boulata entitled "Homage to Jerusalem," an exhibition of paintings by late Palestinian artist Zulfia Al Sa'di, an exhibition by Palestinian-American photographer Sa'id Nuseibah entitled "The Farthest Mosque" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Nov. 12 (Tel. 4643251/2).

The Editor and Staff of the Jordan Times mourn the passing of

Suleiman Arar

uncle of their friend and colleague

Ma'moun Arar.

May his soul rest in peace.

سليمه ارار

Chavez wins Venezuela presidency

CARACAS (R) — Failed coup leader Hugo Chavez, a radical populist whose platform alarms the business community, scored a landslide win in Venezuela's presidential vote Sunday, obtaining at the ballot box what he tried to win with bullets.

With more than two-thirds of votes counted, the charismatic former paratrooper was elected to rule the oil-rich country for the next five years after campaigning on a nationalist anti-establishment stance that appealed to the impoverished masses.

His closest rival, Yale-educated businessman Henrique Salas, conceded defeat following official results showing Chavez ahead with 56.2 per cent of the vote compared to 39.7 per cent for him.

"I accept the victory of my adversary and wish him a lot of luck," a tired but relaxed Salas told reporters.

Chavez, 44, portrayed by his opponents as a dangerous leftist rabble rouser with autocratic tendencies, said he would prove his critics wrong following a victory likely to send jitters through Wall Street.

"Investors will find a serious government with honest people," he said minutes after the first results were announced.

"We welcome all those willing to invest in our productive sectors," he told a local television network.

Chavez, who burst on the

national scene with his bloody putsch on Feb. 4, 1992, had been for months the clear favourite to succeed Rafael Caldera, 82, who was constitutionally barred from seeking reelection.

Chavez, who has been denied a U.S. travel visa, said he received a telephone call from the White House but did not say from whom.

Wild celebrations by Chavez supporters, with people dancing in the streets and throwing firecrackers, erupted in Caracas.

"Chavez is the only one with a feeling for the people," said Milagros Trujillo, 39, a nurse and mother of five wearing the Chavez traditional red beret of the special forces he led.

"Now we're going to have a real democracy where the people decide... the corrupt ones will have to leave."

Chavez campaigned on pledges to rewrite the constitution, rid the country of what he called antiquated political patronage and distribute the wealth of the world's third largest oil exporter.

His critics accused him of wanting to create a regime modelled on Cuba's Fidel Castro, whom he visited in 1994 months after his release from two years in jail.

One of his first statements as president-elect was to deny he would impose "a Cuban-style dictatorship."

The election campaign

divided Venezuela along class lines with Chavez riding a tide of popular anger at falling living standards and rampant corruption.

Salas, a 62-year-old respected former state governor, appealed largely to the wealthy pro-American elite alarmed by Chavez's military background and leftist platform.

"You can ask anyone on this street, and there won't be a single one not voting for Chavez," said Jose, 33, a labourer from a poor Caracas neighbourhood.

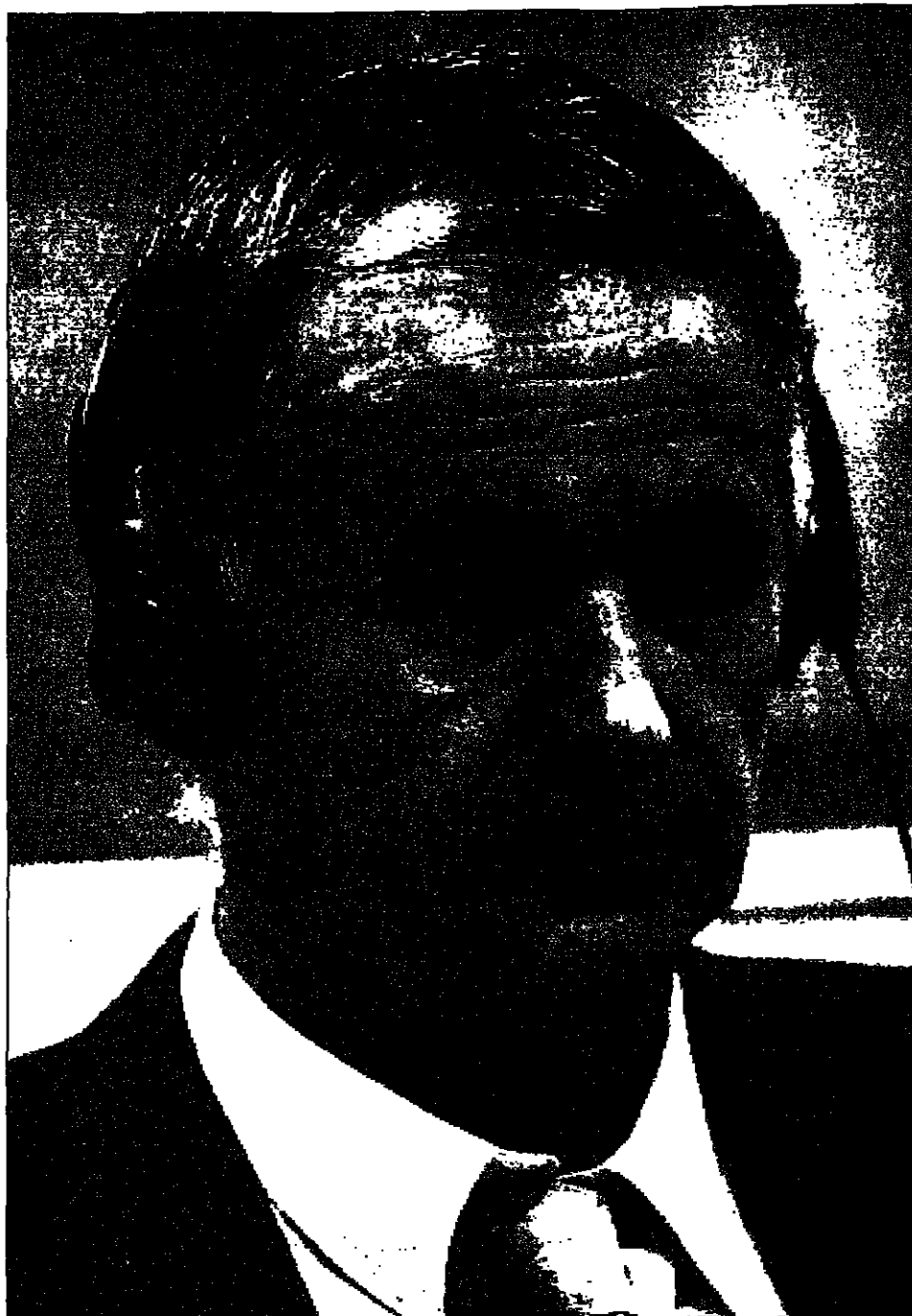
"In 40 years of democracy the traditional parties have never done anything for us. We're voting for Chavez because there is so much corruption here and we want a real change," he said.

Political analysts called the election a sea change after 40 years of democratic rule that has seen two traditional, but now widely discredited, political parties taking turns in power.

For the first time, these two parties, centre-left Democratic Action (AD) and centre-right Copei, presented no candidate.

Both withdrew their nominees in the last week of the campaign and threw their support, and well-oiled political machinery, behind Salas in a bid to beat Chavez.

Despite persistent rumours of possible trouble leading up to the vote, there were no reports of incidents.



Bosnian Serb General Radislav Krstic makes his initial appearance before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. According to the Chief Prosecutor of the U.N. Tribunal Louise Arbour, Krstic was a key player in the 1995 massacre of Muslims who had sought refuge in the U.N. safe area of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia during the 1992-1995 Bosnia war (Reuters photo)

Bosnian Serb general pleads not guilty to genocide

THE HAGUE (A) — Bosnian Serb General Radislav Krstic pleaded not guilty Monday to charges of genocide and crimes against humanity for his alleged role in the 1995 massacre of Muslims in the U.N.-protected enclave of Srebrenica.

"I plead not guilty," Krstic said before a packed courtroom.

Krstic, a lieutenant-general, is the highest-ranking military officer in the Bosnian Serb army to appear before the U.N. war crimes court. He was arrested by NATO-led troops near Bijeljina Wednesday in an operation that was heavily criticised by Russia.

Remaining seated due to physical problems linked to an amputated leg, the 50-year-old grew slightly irritated as he pleaded not guilty to each of the six counts against him.

He is charged with genocide and complicity to commit genocide as well as three counts of crimes against humanity, for extermination, murder and persecution, and one count of a violation of the laws or customs of war for events that occurred between July 11 and Nov. 1, 1995, following the fall of Srebrenica when thousands of Bosnian Muslim men were executed.

Dressed smartly in a grey-green suit and patterned

pastel tie, Krstic looked calm and attentive as he followed the proceedings.

Prosecutor Brenda Hollis told judges that she intended to call some 50 to 70 witnesses to prove allegations that Krstic was one of the main organisers of the slaughter at Srebrenica, the bloodiest massacre of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war.

The judges meanwhile set a tentative date for the trial's commencement at the beginning of April.

Krstic for his part complained about his conditions of detention, particularly the fact that there was currently no heating in the cells which was having an adverse effect on his leg injury.

Neither Krstic nor his lawyer Nenad Petrusic made any reference to allegation by Bosnian Serb president Nikola Poplasen that Krstic had been beaten up during his arrest.

At the same time of his detention, Krstic held the position of commander of the fifth corps of the Bosnian Serb army (VRS), based in Sokolac in north-eastern Bosnia.

He was secretly indicted by the ICTY on Nov. 2 along with two other Bosnian Serb officers whose names are blacked out and will remain secret until their eventual arrest.

The indictment alleges

that the three men "intended to destroy a part of the Bosnian Muslim people as a national, ethnic or religious group."

"Krstic planned, instigated, ordered or otherwise aided and abetted in the planning, preparation or execution of a planned and organised mass execution of thousands of captured Bosnian Muslims men from the Srebrenica safe area," the document said.

Srebrenica, in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina, was a Muslim enclave and U.N.-declared "safe-area" until July 11, 1995, when Serb forces rushed aside the lightly armed Dutch-U.N. peacekeepers, overran the zone, then killed thousands of its male inhabitants.

The exact number of dead is not known but international Red Cross figures indicate that more than 7,000 people are still missing. It is the worst case of genocide in Europe since World War II.

The indictment alleges that executions of Muslims were carried out in at least 11 locations. Soldiers at each site, all under Krstic's command, summarily executed Bosnian Muslims in the hundreds using automatic weapons and hand grenades.

Krstic is one of 26 war crimes suspects currently detained by the ICTY.

NEWS IN BRIEF

At least 10 die in two Paris fires

PARIS (R) — Seven people died in a fire at an old people's home near Paris early Monday, firemen said. They said more than 30 people were injured in the blaze which apparently started in a bedroom. Firemen said the death toll was provisional and they were still searching for more possible casualties in the ruins of the home, in the northern suburb of Livry-Gargan. Another blaze in a five-storey apartment block in central Paris took three lives, firemen said. One of the victims fell to her death after jumping out of a window onto a parked car to escape the blaze. Firemen said both fires were brought under control.

Casper the robot fits artificial hips

MUNICH (DPA) — More and more artificial hips seem to be fitted with the aid of a robot developed in Germany. The new computerised operating system, nicknamed Casper, was introduced at Munich University hospital. The director of the hospital's orthopaedic clinic, Professor Hans Juergen Refior, said the robot could mill to a 0.1-millimetre degree of accuracy. "No surgeon can work manually with that level of steadiness and precision," he added. Before the operation, the hip and surrounding tissue are given a CAT scan. The scan data are then fed to the robot. Guided by a surgeon using a type of remote control, Casper then uses the stored data to operate. Refior explained that the new operating method was less troublesome for patients, and required a shorter hospital stay. Weight could be put on the no-cement artificial hip just one day after the operation, he said. Casper, already in use in the accident surgery department at Erlangen hospital, is expected to perform up to 300 operations a year at the Munich university hospital. Refior is planning to extend the use of the robot to knee-joint, crucial ligament and spinal column operations.

Experts hope HIV survivors

will provide key to AIDS vaccine

NEW DELHI (DPA) — Australian research scientists are hoping to find the key to an AIDS vaccine in long-term survivors infected with HIV. Six patients had survived with an unusual type of HIV virus for up to 17 years, medical researcher John Mills told an international immunology conference in New Delhi. Mills, who works at the Macfarlane Burnet Centre for Medical Research in Victoria, Australia, said the patients were carriers of a strain of the AIDS pathogen which did not trigger the disease. This strain contained a mutant version of a gene which normally played a major role in triggering AIDS. It must be shown, however, whether a vaccine could be produced from these mutant viruses, said Ulrich Marcus of Berlin's Robert Koch Institute. It was not yet clear whether the virus was really weakened or whether it simply multiplied more slowly, thus leading to a delay in the onset of the disease. With the familiar strains of HIV, there was an average ten-year delay between infection and outbreak of AIDS. Possibly, this might be extended to 20 years in the case of the newly-discovered virus. Originally, nine HIV-positive patients had been identified as having the mutant strain. According to Mills, all were infected between 1981 and 1984 through blood transfusions from the same donor. In the meantime, three had died of causes unrelated to AIDS. The U.S. journal Science first reported the Victoria Institute's work three years ago, when the carriers had been infected for between 12 and 15 years.

Bangladesh police deny top Indian terrorist murdered in Dhaka

DHAKA (DPA) — Bangladesh police have confirmed that the body of a man found beside a railroad track in Dhaka was not the fugitive Indian terrorist Abdul Karim Tunda, press reports said Monday. The influential daily "Ittefaq" quoted senior police officials as saying the body, with an iron wire wrapped around the neck and a chopped off arm, was of a jobless engineer suspected of committing suicide under a running train late Thursday. "Top terrorist Tunda is still hiding in Bangladesh," the newspaper said, quoting an unnamed senior police official in Dhaka. Police gave the dead engineer's name as Shambhu Kumar Saha, aged 28. Earlier, Indian press reports said Tunda was found murdered by a rival underworld faction in Dhaka several months after he had crossed into neighbouring Bangladesh. Tunda is wanted by Indian police for involvement in 32 cases of bombing public places, causing many fatalities. Indian authorities, tipped off Dhaka police on Tunda's illegal entry into Bangladesh in June, official sources said. India also warned Dhaka police that the 40-year-old fugitive could be planning terrorist attacks inside Bangladesh. Indian press reports also claimed that Tunda worked for the Pakistani intelligence.

Vietnamese judge gets five years' jail for taking bribe

HANOI (DPA) — A Vietnamese judge was sentenced to five years in prison for taking a bribe to settle an assault case in favour of the defendants, officials said Monday. Pham Huong, 37, broke down in tears during cross-examination in which he admitted he had sought 6 million dong (\$428) from the families of two defendants. Police arrested Huong just after he accepted \$128 from the mother of one defendant, who came to the judge's house. She had earlier alerted police to the solicitation, which came through a friend of the judge, because she was poor and not able to raise the whole amount demanded. The \$128 were equal to about three months pay for the judge. The sentence was passed Saturday in the south-central province of Nha Trang, where Huong had worked for 10 years. "That he had worked here so long did not decrease his sentence, it made his crime even worse," said Nguyen Van Vien, the judge sentencing Huong. Pham Anh Tuan, the friend who solicited the bribe, was given prison term of 18 months. The two defendants Huong was prepared to intercede for were sentenced to 24 months and 18 months in a subsequent trial for beating up a third youth, local press reports said. While the judicial system is widely regarded as riddled with corruption, prison terms for judges "on the take" have been rare.

U.S. senator proposes 'new conversation' with Cuba

HAVANA (R) — A U.S. senator said Sunday he would urge his government to take steps to ease its policy towards Cuba and establish a "new conversation for the new millennium" between the two countries.

Sen. Christopher Dodd, a Connecticut Democrat and member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, made the announcement in Havana after meeting President Fidel Castro, other senior Cuban officials and representatives of sectors of Cuban society, including the Catholic Church and political dissidents.

"In my view, this is the time to begin a new conversation between the United States and Cuba... a new conversation for the new millennium," Dodd told foreign reporters in a briefing.

He said U.S. policy towards the Communist-ruled Caribbean island over the last four decades had oscillated between periods of "outright hostility" and "raw neglect" and had achieved no concrete positive results.

"This just can't go on, day after day, month after month," he added.

Dodd, who said he would brief President Bill Clinton on his trip to Cuba, proposed five steps that "I would urge the United States to take in the coming months." These would imply a easing of the long-standing U.S. economic embargo against Cuba.

The steps he suggested were to allow U.S. food and medicine sales to the island, to lift restrictions on travel between the two countries and to increase contacts between U.S. and Cuban officials and diplomats to promote "constructive dialogue."

Dodd also proposed increased joint cooperation against terrorism and drug-trafficking and on environmental issues. For his fifth point, he expressed support for the creation of a national commission to review current U.S. policy towards Cuba.

He said the idea of the commission, which is already supported by a group of U.S. Congress members and some senior former administration officials, was to try to "crystallise" the growing debate about U.S. policy towards Cuba.

Dodd said he believed the U.S. and Cuba needed to move away from what he called "the notion of tit-for-tat" in which each side routinely demanded that the other change as a condition for altering current policy.

He said the U.S. government needed to do what was right for its own people. "We do not deny food and medicine to anyone in the world... you don't do that," he said, arguing that the current ban on food and medicine sales to Cuba should end.

He also said he believed most Americans were unhappy about government restrictions on travel by U.S. nationals to Cuba.

Earlier this year, Dodd was the co-sponsor of a bill in the Congress that proposed easing of the embargo to allow sales on humanitarian grounds of U.S. food and medicines to Cuba.

The bill did not pass because of opposition from Cuban-American legislators but it was widely expected to be revived in the next Congress session.

Dodd said he had generally encountered strong support for his proposals from the Cubans, officials and otherwise, he had spoken to during his five-day visit. He had toured a hospital and a market, where he chatted with shoppers and stall holders.

He described his Friday night meeting with Castro, which lasted some six hours, as "very cordial, interesting and positive" but with "no big breakthroughs."

He hoped this would be the first of several visits to Cuba to pursue this dialogue. "I'm a lot more optimistic than I thought I might be," he said.

But he added he was aware that there was opposition from Cuban-American legislators at home to any easing of the current U.S. policy towards Cuba, even for example to the idea of the national commission to review the existing policy.

"I don't think that in the short term the lifting of the (U.S.) embargo (against Cuba) is likely," he said, while insisting only a new approach would break the current deadlock.

N. American glaciers melting — researchers uneasy

SEATTLE (DPA) — North America is thawing out and scientists now believe that this is one of the clearest signs for changes in global climate.

Worldwide, more and more people endure far hotter summer weather and record temperatures. But the well-documented melting of glaciers in Canada and the northern U.S. is according to expert opinion a still much clearer pointer on global warming. Even many glaciers in Austria and Switzerland have shrunk in the last few years.

With more than 1,000 glaciers Alaska is one of the most ice-rich areas

of the world. Regional scientists such as climatologist Gunter Weller and forestry specialist Glenn Juday of the University of Alaska see the climate changes on their own doorstep with serious concern.

Along the comparison of photos from the last decades clearly shows how quickly the ice masses are receding. The gigantic Columbia Glacier for example which enters the sea in the north Pacific coast of Alaska has shrunk by about 13 kilometres in the last 16 years.

But also the Athabasca Glacier in the Columbia Icefield on the western

Canadian Rocky Mountains lost since the 1970s at over 50 million cubic metres of mass, reported the researcher Eric Mattson from the Nipissing University, which has been observing the glacier for years.

And immediately south of the Canadian border, in the Glacier National Park, Montana, researchers are looking at the influence of general warming on the ice that has given the well-known tourist attraction its name.

The glaciers there could completely disappear within the next 50 to 70 years, warned

geologist Mark Meier at a conference in Boston.

The glacier regions have warmed dramatically quicker than the rest of the planet. World-wide scientists have measured an average warming of less than one degree Celsius in the past 100 years.

In the northern most regions though according to the University of Alaska are up to three degrees. And above all the winter months are getting warmer and warmer.

Researchers such as the climatologist Weller have the following explanation for the increased warming effect in the cold regions: when ice and

snow melt the region absorbs the heat yet stronger, instead of reflecting it. And that increases the global trend.

Forestry expert Glenn Juday told the Anchorage Daily News that the catastrophic consequences of warming for Alaska's forests. "We've got a sick forest here," said Juday.

To back this up he points to a lack of rainfall in summer and snowfalls in winter which makes it difficult for vegetation to grow in the area around the Columbia Glacier.

The rising temperatures allow parasites — destructive beetles and worms — to survive

and destroy whole forests in just a few years. The water of the nearby glacier cannot reduce the dryness in the wooded areas because the ice melts directly into the sea.

The inland glaciers of the Rocky Mountains on the other hand supply cities like Calgary and Edmonton with water in the dry western Canadian prairie — at the moment.

If the ancient ice in the Columbia Icefields continues to melt at a record rate, the next hundred years may see equally disastrous water shortages as are now occurring in Alaska's glacier regions.



Former Chancellor and outgoing Christian Democratic Party (CDU) leader Helmut Kohl looks as party board members applaud after his speech at the CDU party congress in Bonn. The Christian Democrats were to name a successor to Kohl as chairman, and the only candidate for the post was Wolfgang Schäuble. Beside Kohl, is party manager Peter Hintze (Reuters photo)

Former Chancellor Kohl steps down as his party's leader

BONN (AFP) — Six weeks after losing general elections, former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl stepped down Saturday as his party's leader, claiming German reunification and greater European unity as his accomplishments.

"In our land much has profoundly changed in the last 25 years, and much that has changed for the better is above all our work, dear friends," Kohl told a congress in Bonn of his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party.

Kohl relinquished the post of CDU secretary general, a position he has held for 25 years. For the past 16 years he was Germany's chancellor.

He will be replaced by the man he has chosen to succeed him: Wolfgang Schäuble, 56, the CDU parliamentary whip. Kohl told the CDU congress convened to elect the new leadership that after the election loss Sept. 27, "it is obvious to me to take responsibility for the consequences of this result."

His farewell speech was his last as a national leader, as he left office as chancellor when the new centre-left government took over Oct. 27.

Kohl had tears in his eyes

when his long-time comrade, Norbert Blum, who was labour minister for the entire 16-year length of the Kohl chancellorship, said: "This is not an ordinary party congress. It is the last party congress under Helmut Kohl."

Kohl was however elected honorary CDU president, and will remain in parliament as a deputy.

He blasted the new coalition government of the Social Democrats (SPD) and Greens ecologists as "stepping back (in its programme) from the basic values which have made up the success of our federal state."

He said their tax reform programme "respects little the conditions of couples and families or the results of business."

Kohl referred to the alliance the SPD has formed with former Communists to govern in the eastern state of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania as a sign that instead of forming a "new middle" as SPD Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has promised, the federal government was headed for the "old left."

Kohl defended his record,

and stressed that the move of the government next year to Berlin would be one of continuity and not a radical change as the SPD has said from a Bonn to a Berlin republic.

He said the CDU, and its sister party the Bavarian-based Christian Social Union (CSU), was ready to take up the role of the conservative opposition.

"As the opposition party is the CDU in the position to give the answers and questions of tomorrow," Kohl said.

He recalled that when he took office in 1982 Germany was divided and there was "for many the fear of a military confrontation between the Warsaw Pact and the Atlantic Alliance."

He praised the new European single currency of which he was one of the main architects as something that "16 years ago was only a vision of an empty Utopia (but) now it will be real."

Similarly, German reunification in 1990, was, he said, "the happiest moment in the history of Germans."

Schäuble, who has been confined to a wheelchair since being shot while campaigning in 1990, has scored regularly

in opinion polls as Germany's most popular politician.

But he may face a struggle for the conservative leadership in Germany against Edmund Stoiber, the leader of the CDU's sister party in Bavaria, the Christian Social Union (CSU).

Angela Merkel, 44, the former environment minister, is to take over as CDU party secretary general from Peter Hintze, the man blamed for Kohl's unfocused and ineffective campaign against Schröder.

Schäuble's four party vice-chairmen are to be former Defence Minister Volker Rühe, 56, Christian Wulff, 39, former labour minister Norbert Blum, 63, and Annette Schavan, 43.

Many pundits see Rühe as ultimately the best vote-getter for the conservatives. Wulff lost badly to Schröder in state elections in Lower Saxony in March but represents the youth wing of the party.

The CDU will not be discussing a new programme Saturday, concentrating first on personalities, leaving questions of policy until another party congress in the new year.

U.S. may seek Pinochet's extradition

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Top U.S. officials are studying the possibility of asking Britain to extradite former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet to the United States to face charges of masterminding a 1976 car bomb attack here, the Miami Herald reported Saturday.

The discussions include members of the U.S. Justice and State departments, as well as the National Security Council, according to the Herald.

The 1976 attack in Washington's Embassy Row killed Orlando Letelier, a former minister of the government of President Salvador Allende

— who Pinochet ousted in a bloody 1973 military coup — and Ronni Moffitt, a U.S.-born analyst for a local think tank.

Officials stressed that no decision was made, and Pinochet currently faces no charges in the United States, the Herald reports.

Lawrence Barcella, the U.S. prosecutor who investigated the case, however told the newspaper that he was convinced Pinochet was behind the attack.

Barcella, now in private practice, described the attack as "an act of state-sponsored terror."

After years of U.S. pressure General Manuel Contreras, the head of the

DINA, Chile's secret police, was convicted of the car bomb attack and sentenced in 1995 in Chile to seven years in prison.

But Barcella insists that Pinochet was directly involved, citing an affidavit Contreras gave from prison stating that Pinochet gave "explicit orders" for all intelligence operations, according to the Herald.

Pinochet opponents were also murdered in Buenos Aires and Rome, allegedly by Chilean DINA agents.

Pinochet was arrested in Britain on Oct. 16 following an extradition request from Spanish investigating magistrate Baltasar Garçon. He was recovering

at the time from back surgery in a London clinic.

However, Britain's High Court ruled last month that Pinochet could not be extradited because he had sovereign immunity for crimes that took place when he was head of state.

Britain's House of Lords is currently hearing an appeal lodged by the Crown Prosecution Service on behalf of Spanish authorities and London police.

Garçon wants the 82-year-old former dictator tried on charges of genocide, torture and terrorism allegedly committed during his 1973-1990 military rule.

Closure of paper where India's first prime minister, Nehru, once worked

LUCKNOW, India (AP) — When the assets of the National Herald go up for sale next week, among the mementoes from the once illustrious newspaper will be a table and chair used by a noted reporter, Jawaharlal Nehru.

A court has ordered the paper and its sister publications to sell off their stocks to pay three years of accumulated electricity and telephone bills, the salaries of 538 employees that have gone unpaid for 22 months, and other debts totalling 60 million rupees (\$1.43 million). An auction was scheduled for Nov. 9.

It is a sad end to a paper venerated by many Indians as a weapon in their independence fight against Britain, and which was the proud organ of the Congress

Party when Nehru was the unchallenged leader of the party and the nation.

The National Herald is the flagship of Associated Journals Ltd., which also owns a Hindi- and Urdu-language daily. All three papers shut down in Lucknow two months ago, but the New Delhi edition of the English paper still prints about 500 copies daily.

The group is run by a trust founded by Nehru and now controlled by Sonia Gandhi, the widow of Nehru's grandson Rajiv Gandhi and current head of the Congress Party.

"The newspapers' employees are starving and had approached the High Court, which ordered the state government of auction off the movable properties," said Shyama Charan Tiwari,

an editor of the Hindi-language Navjeevan.

An auction notice was posted on the imposing gates of the colonial-era four-storey office of Associated Journals announcing the sale of furniture, rare books and manuscripts, as well as computers and laser printers.

The National Herald was founded in Lucknow in 1938 by two prominent members of the Congress Party, which was the engine of India's independence movement. The headquarters shifted to New Delhi, 410 kilometres to the west, in 1963.

"Whenever Nehru was in Lucknow, he would write out news reports on meetings held by Congress leaders or articles of India's freedom struggle in his own hand while sitting among

other sub editors and reporters," said Gurcharan Rai, who at 71 is one of the paper's oldest employees.

Although the paper had a pro-national line, it remained editorially independent until the early 1970s, when Nehru's daughter and political heir, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, used it for her own agenda. Circulation began to fall.

The paper was threatened with closure once before. An auction was due to be held in 1987, but it was scheduled for the birthday of then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi — Indira's son.

As a birthday gift, Congress leaders collected the money to pay enough bills to keep the paper going.

Indonesia's Habibie vows to act against violence

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia's President B.J. Habibie vowed to take stern action against violence Saturday following the mob killing of three men suspected of involvement in a series of grisly murders.

The three men were killed by a mob Saturday in the town of Pemalang in Central Java and thousands rioted as police refused to hand over two more.

"The government has and will continue to take stern action against any form of threats, terror and violence which threatens the safety and property of the people," he said in a speech to a Muslim gathering.

"I have asked security officials in the region to increase vigilance in facing any threats that disturb life in society," he said.

One rioter was shot dead by police, witnesses said. The local police chief declined to comment.

The riot broke out after a mob attacked a minivan in the Central Java town of Pemalang, 350 km east of Jakarta.

They believed the five men in the van were some of the mob-style killers who have murdered at least 140 people in Indonesia in recent months, residents said.

The mob set the van ablaze and beat to death three of its occupants, before security forces res-

cued the other two. Crowds then attacked the police station, demanding the men be handed over.

The unrest in Pemalang had been brought under control but the situation remained tense, one witness said by telephone from the town.

The killing spree began in the East Java town of Banyuwangi but the murders later spread to other areas of Java. Most of the victims have been alleged practitioners of black magic or Muslim clerics.

Locals spoke of black-clad assailants, whom they called ninjas, moving through towns and villages at night, knocking on the doors of victims, calling them out and

killing them. Victims were often chopped into pieces and tied into bundles which were then dangled from trees or thrown into mosques.

The killings have sparked a wave of reprisals with mobs lynching people suspected of being ninjas. Some of those lynched have been mentally ill, and some reports say unknown men have been rounding up the mentally ill and dumping them in unfamiliar towns to feed the hysteria.

The army has also promised to investigate claims deserters from the feared Kopassus special forces were behind the killings.

Clinton wants loophole in U.S. gun law closed

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton directed his government Saturday to find a way to close a legal loophole that allows dealers to sell guns at gun shows with no questions asked.

In his weekly radio address, Clinton said a "dangerous trend" is emerging at gun shows because the Brady handgun control law permits some firearms to be sold without background checks at these shows.

"Some of these gun shows

have become illegal arms bazaars for criminals and gun traffickers looking to buy and sell guns on a dash-and-carry, no-questions-asked basis," Clinton said.

He directed Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and Attorney General Janet Reno to report back to him in 60 days with a plan to close the loophole and prohibit any gun sale without a background check.

"I believe this should be the law of the land: No background check, no gun, no exceptions," Clinton

said.

In a fact sheet, the White House said that every year about 5 million people attend an estimated 5,000 gun shows at convention centres, school gyms and on fairgrounds.

The Brady law requires a five-day waiting period for gun purchasers in order for a background check. On Nov. 30, the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System is set to take effect to allow quicker checks and approve gun sales within minutes.

In addition, as of Nov. 30, the law will be strengthened in two ways: purchases of all firearms, not just handguns, will be subject to Brady background checks as will pawnshop redemptions, which are four times as likely to involve a prohibited purchase.

Overall, the White House said, it is estimated that the number of background checks conducted nationally will increase from 4 million to between 10 and 12 million.



Russian protesters hold ultranationalist flags as they protest in front of St. Basil's cathedral in Red Square. Thousands of Communists marked the 81st anniversary of the 1917 Russian revolution Saturday, marching through Moscow and other cities under the red banner (Reuters photo)

Communists mark Russian revolution day

MOSCOW (AP) — Demanding the resignation of President Boris Yeltsin, thousands of mostly Communist demonstrators marched throughout Russia Saturday to mark the 81st anniversary of the Russian revolution.

Many protesters were elderly and poor, and their common refrain was that Yeltsin was to blame for the loss of Soviet-era stability and the country's economic collapse.

But the crowds, which have been dwindling in recent years, were far short of the organisers' predictions.

In Moscow, police estimated that about 5,000 people took part in a march that concluded at Lubyanka square, site of the former headquarters of the KGB secret police. Communist Party organisers had forecast up to 300,000 marchers.

Even among the protesters there was a sense of disappointment in the turnout, but many

blamed that on Yeltsin as well.

"People used to celebrate this holiday," said retired teacher Lidya Alexeeva, waving a small red flag in time to the music of a marching band. "Now there are no holidays. If you live in our country, you see that our people are the poorest in the world."

Similar demonstrations were held in scores of other cities and towns across Russia, and there were no reports of trouble.

In Belarus, where authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko is openly nostalgic for Soviet times, about 4,000 demonstrators gathered in the capital city of Minsk and some placed flowers by a monument to Vladimir Lenin. Communists in the former Soviet republic of Armenia unveiled a new bust of Lenin in Yerevan.

The relatively quiet gathering in Moscow was in sharp contrast to the Soviet-era spectacles where the country's Communist

leaders gathered atop Lenin's mausoleum on Red Square to review a massive military parade as hundreds of thousands of citizens looked on.

There is widespread discontent with Yeltsin, whose popularity rating is in single digits, according to several recent polls.

But opposition groups have not been able to mount large street demonstrations, strikes, or other protests.

The president has been at the southern Black Sea resort of Sochi for the past week, recuperating from his latest illness, described as fatigue and high blood pressure.

Besides criticising Yeltsin at every turn, Communist speakers said they would work to help Russia's poor make it through the winter with enough food.

"We must quickly gather all our resources and provide all people with the ability to sur-

vive the winter," said Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov. "Solidarity is the greatest weapon of the people."

The country's economic crisis has prompted concerns about possible food shortages in Russia, and the United States reached an agreement with the Russians Friday to provide more than 3 million tonnes of food aid this winter.

Zyuganov also said Communist leaders had passed around a petition to governors and parliament deputies across Russia asking them to support yet another call for Yeltsin's ouster.

The president, meanwhile, says he will serve out the remainder of his term, which runs until the year 2000.

Some young supporters of far-right groups took part in the demonstration, but otherwise the crowd was made up almost entirely of older Russians.

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Dealing with disasters

HURRICANE MITCH that recently hit three Latin American countries left thousands killed or injured and the lives of many more devastated. The peoples of Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua were hit so badly and savagely by the hurricane that according to conservative estimates it would take these three countries decades to recover from their losses. Despite these high human costs, the kind of international aid that was channelled to the three countries was nowhere near enough to cope with the size of the crisis. Many countries donated medicines and emergency aid to deal with the situation, but the infrastructure of the three countries which was so devastated by the ferocity of the hurricane was left unattended to.

The consequences of Hurricane Mitch prove beyond a shadow of doubt that the international community is not prepared to deal with natural disasters. Existing international agencies are obviously not strong enough to cope with the magnitude of the crises that usually accompany major natural disasters. This fact brings to the fore the initiative undertaken by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to establish a new international humanitarian order to deal with a variety of massive human suffering including, of course, earthquakes and hurricanes. The new international humanitarian order envisages the creation of more appropriate machineries to deal with inter alia, hurricanes and similar natural phenomena that destroy the lives of people. Instead of seeking bilateral aid and rescue missions, what is needed is a well-funded international organisation that is capable of offering meaningful support to countries affected by major wars or natural catastrophes. Most of the countries that are vulnerable to disasters are developing nations that have little or no capacity to deal with their results. Whether people are hit by floods or warfare, they must benefit from an international programme of action that is solidly financed and managed. Better still, if human beings could ever devise scientific ways to prevent natural disasters or lessen the probability of them happening. It is already evident that man's flouting of his environment contributes to natural disasters. When mankind ignores the sounds of alarm about its ecosystem, we can only expect more natural disasters to occur. Preventive action is therefore much more effective than remedial measures.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek commented on Al Jazirah's Al-Ijtihad Al Muakke's (The Opposite Direction) programme which attacked the Kingdom's regime and cast doubt upon its role in the Arab cause. Fanek said the programme has lost the glamour it used to have. Audiences used to long for the live talk show, but unfortunately the programme has become all bark and no bite, said Fanek. The format of the programme sees Faisal Qassem, producer and host, inviting mainstream and fringe speakers to discuss issues of concern. In the case of last Thursday's programme, Kamel Abu Jaber, the former Jordanian foreign minister, represented the rational, and Mohammad Khaleifa represented the name. Fanek said that according to a recent poll only 2.5 per cent of Jordanians watched the show, and hence the government should have ignored the programme, because the official reaction imbued the show with more importance than it really can claim.

Al Dostour's Oreib Rintawi called on the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Jordan Press Association to form a media management body specialised in addressing audiences abroad. This body should find qualified Jordanians to polish the country's image. The writer also called on the JPA to open its doors to the hundreds of Jordanian journalists who live abroad and occupy important positions, that they may serve their nation more effectively. Rintawi said that it is more important to show the rest of the world, rather than ourselves, the true role Jordan played in defending Jerusalem. Such a move is the only answer to the organised propaganda campaign launched against Jordan, claimed the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

The IMF and unfinished business

Dr. Fahed Fanek

ECONOMIC REFORM in Jordan started in 1989, when the government called on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help with its foreign debt, and agreed with the IMF and the World Bank on an economic stabilisation and adjustment programme, interrupted in its second year by the Gulf war, until 1992.

The very first step of reform, i.e., raising the prices of fuel in April 1989, was met with demonstrations and violence in the streets of several Jordanian cities, especially in the poor south. It became obvious to the Jordanian leadership that economic reform would not take place peacefully unless accompanied, hand in hand, by political reform.

General elections were called for the first time, and stalled parliamentary life was restored. New laws to legalise political parties, allow a free press, and revoke martial law were enacted. The democratisation drive took off, which allowed economic reform to be implemented by near consensus. The Jordanian people accepted making huge economic sacrifices, something that would not have happened had they not been allowed to participate in making the difficult decisions.

In two months time, the present economic adjustment programme, 1992-1998, will come to an end. At this

juncture we have to admit that economic reforms were not fully completed; there remains a lot of unfinished business. That is why a new three-year programme will be agreed upon and adopted for implementation during 1999-2001.

Discussions between Jordan on one hand, and the IMF and the World Bank on the other over the contents of the new programme will start early next year. It is not clear yet what the objectives will be of the new programme, or what the timetable for implementation would look like. However, we may be confident that most, if not all, of the contents will be reforms which were already agreed upon and included in the current programme, but were not, for some reason, implemented on time.

In the absence of concrete information, we can only speculate that the coming programme will cover around the following issues:

1 — The privatisation of public sector enterprises involved in the production or marketing of goods and services for the market. This includes communication, transport, hotels, and other government involvement in the paid-up capital of some public shareholding companies.

2 — Restructuring of certain weak sectors such as

water, public health, and civil aviation.

3 — Reduction of the budget deficit, which is feared to rise in 1998 to over eight per cent of gross domestic product (GDP); this will amount to a serious set-back in Jordan's financial drive towards fiscal independence and self-sufficiency.

4 — Resumption of economic growth at rates to exceed the high growth rate of population which, so far, has caused continuous deterioration of living standards as measured by per capita consumption in real terms.

5 — Paying more attention to social issues such as poverty and unemployment, as the need to alleviate their impact is now felt more strongly.

6 — Getting ready for the European partnership and the accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) through enhancing the competitiveness of Jordanian productive sectors to cope with the expected competition with the minimum of protection.

7 — The social security package aiming at boosting productivity by way of developing infrastructure, improving public services, and upgrading the quality of life, especially in underdeveloped areas such as refugees camps, country side villages and other random housing.

The spy they wanted to hang

By G.H. Jansen

LAST MONTH'S Wye Plantation accord between U.S. President Bill Clinton, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was nearly torpedoed when Netanyahu demanded that Clinton release Jonathan Pollard from prison, an American Jew convicted 11 years ago of spying for Israel.

Netanyahu waited until the accord had been initiated to put forward this demand, saying he would not attend the formal signing ceremony in the White House unless Pollard was permitted to fly to Israel on the premier's personal plane.

A furious Clinton said the best he could do was to review Pollard's record and reconsider his life sentence. A chastened Netanyahu attended the ceremony and signed the Wye accord while his attempt at blackmail was condemned by Israel's closest political allies in Congress. House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate majority leader Trent Lott, who consider Pollard "one of the most notorious traitors in U.S. history" and insist that he remain in jail. Although Netanyahu's demand for Pollard's release has been shelved for a time, the convicted spy remains a source of acute tension between the U.S. and Israel.

Jonathan Jay Pollard is, however, hardly a hero. Born in 1954 in Texas, he grew up in Indiana and attended the prestigious Stanford University in California, where he attained a reputation as an oddity, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University located near Boston, where he spied for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on fellow students. In 1977 the CIA rejected Pollard as a recruit on the ground he was too unstable, but in 1979 he secured employment as a civilian analyst in Naval intelligence.

For the next five years he served in several Naval intelligence departments in the Washington area. During this time he offered classified information to interested U.S. businessmen, Israel and three other unnamed foreign countries as well as prospective employers of his wife, Anne Henderson Pollard.

In May 1984 he was recruited by a secret Israeli technological and scientific espionage unit, called "Lakam" which is connected with Israeli military intelligence (which was then headed by the current Labour Party head, Ehud Barak). In June, Pollard secured promotion to a unit monitoring terrorism for the Naval Intelligence Service. In this outfit Pollard had computer access to the entire U.S. defence archive.

Pollard was a hardworking and dedicated agent. From June 1984 till November 21, 1985, he supplied Israel with no less than 800,000 pages of documents.

According to the then U.S. Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger, these documents would produce a block measuring 6 feet by 6 feet by ten feet. This mass of documentation was passed on to a woman employee of the Israel Defence Ministry who was specially sent to Washington to process Pollard's product. She worked in an apartment bought and fitted out by a pro-Israeli American Jew for the purpose.

After receiving an initial lump sum of \$10,000, Pollard was paid \$1,500-2,000 a month, not a large sum in U.S. terms but enough to enable the couple to enjoy Washington's high life. Pollard's output was a treasure trove of intelligence.

He gave Israel U.S. codes, the names of U.S. agents in Israel and West Asia, lists and specifications of arms supplied by Russia to Arab countries, the layout of the PLO headquarters in Tunis (bombed — to his satisfaction — in 1985 by Israel), information of countries not normally studied by Israeli agents (Algeria, Libya, Iraq and Pakistan) and a mass of technological data withheld by Washington. After the first few months, Pollard was given detailed lists of what to obtain by his handlers who had been instructed by an even more high-ranking Israeli spy inside the U.S. defence establishment — a spy who may still be in place and in play.

The naval analyst was eventually caught by a singularly unobservant superior who noticed — after 16 months — large piles of documents on Pollard's desk which were wrapped in paper from a computer firm and taken from the office every Friday. After three days of interrogation by naval counterintelligence, Pollard

attempted to secure asylum at the Israeli embassy in Washington on November 21st, 1985.

However, because his handlers, warned of Pollard's difficulties by his wife, had fled the country, no one knew who he was and he and his wife were turned out of the embassy compound into the arms of U.S. agents.

Anne Pollard was sentenced to five years imprisonment for possession of classified documents, while Pollard himself, who readily admitted his guilt, received a life sentence. Secretary Weinberger, who wanted to see him hanged or shot, urged the court to give Pollard the maximum sentence, writing to the presiding judge, "It is difficult for me to conceive a greater harm to national security caused by the defendant".

Weinberger estimated that it would cost the U.S. \$1 billion to repair the damage Pollard had done.

Israel promptly claimed that Lakam was a rogue operation and pledged to return all the documents passed on by Pollard. However, Lakam had been an important arm of Israeli intelligence since 1960 and there was little point in returning photocopies of documents which Israel could easily copy before handing them over. Under severe U.S. pressure Israel eventually dismissed both the man who recruited Pollard and the Lakam chief and closed down the organisation. In exchange, Washington played down the scandal, consigning its official investigation to a Zionist lawyer in the State Department, Abraham Sofaer, an immigrant of Iraqi Jewish origin whose family went to the U.S. via Bombay. The aim of both sides was to bury the scandal.

Pollard was only recognised as an official Israeli "spy" after Netanyahu took over as premier in 1996. Pollard was granted Israeli citizenship and visited in his North Carolina prison by Israel's cabinet secretary and two ministers. So certain was he of his release into Netanyahu's custody during the Wye Plantation summit, that Pollard packed his bags and told fellow inmates that he would be leaving. But this did not happen. Pollard remains in prison, awaiting Clinton's review of his case.

Human first

To the editor:

MY SENSE of isolation and uneasiness as I sat at the square table which seated more than 30 women's rights activists, was not, a bit, alleviated by the presence of 5 other men taking part in the event!

The meeting took place to compare notes on experiences in both Germany and Jordan on women's quest for equal rights with men through legal reform.

All participants including the keynote speakers were more than eloquent and highly informative. But as I listened carefully to the comments, I failed to identify the course of discussion. Everyone commented on the comments of the previous commentators! All sounded like a monologue, not a dialogue!

The 90 minutes or so failed to nail down any controversial or thorny differences between the participants' views themselves. Exactly why, I do not know! Could it be that the organisers of the seminar were more concerned with the aspect of civility and maintaining a docile atmosphere, rather than bringing in some trouble-shooters from the other side of the bench? The result was just another regular get-together, or a tea-party for close friends and associates!

Touching upon the social status of women, one speaker said: "It is seldom that women are thought of as human beings in their own right." Another participant said that a job or a diploma for a woman is but a transitional stage and a kind of dowry for her marriage. I want to venture by adding that charity starts at home, i.e. many women themselves, persist on viewing themselves first as women then as human beings. Equally and sadly true is the fact that only a tiny minority of men do not commit the same mistake!

Salim Ayoub Quna, Amman

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Missing letters in the alphabet soup of tourism development strategies:

G-O-O-D S-E-R-V-I-C-E

By Grumpy Gourmet

ALTHOUGH BY nature discreet to a fault, Grumpy Gourmet cannot resist joining the ongoing debate in the Jordan Times about how many letters of the alphabet are needed to develop and promote tourism to Jordan. ("The Four Ps..." "The ABCs..." "Ps, Ps and more Ps..." "Millennium jitters in the Holy Land") None of these letters spell out "quality" or "customer service". And no one mentioned the necessary training for the staff-managers, waiters, housekeepers, and tourist guides — on whom the success of this alphabet soup recipe depends.

While forming committees to promote Year 2000 tourism to the Holy Land, we should ask ourselves about the quality of our product. How are our hospitality outlets — restaurants and hotels — and the whole network of transportation facilities, guides and travel agencies that support their experience of Jordan, going to measure up? It's not merely a matter of having enough hotel rooms and tour buses to receive the millennium visitors. Will people who come to visit Jordan for three or five days in the Year 2000 ever return? What will they tell others about Jordan? Will they encourage their friends, relatives and colleagues to visit — or warn them to stay away? Do we care? After the Year 2000 — assuming the world does NOT come to an end — what will be the customer base for these hospitality establishments?

I suggest it could be very useful to listen to the more discerning local customers we have now, and to learn how we can improve individual outlets and the comprehensive experience we offer visitors and residents, alike.

Since 1995, I have been hearing from Jordanian citizens and foreign residents and visitors about their experiences with Jordanian restaurants and tourism services. This admittedly small group of people is representative of our

small local market for the upscale restaurant/hotel/resort establishments. Most of this "elite" know each other and their opinions have a powerful effect on the patronage patterns of their peers. I have heard from hundreds, maybe thousands, of frustrated or satisfied customers, many of whom provided detailed explanations of their experiences among Jordan's most prestigious and popular eateries — and other travel-related businesses. Their main complaints — and some solutions — can be summarised as follows:

Problems:

1) Good food & ambience/poor service: Poor service can spoil the entire experience. Owners' investments in impressive physical plants, tasteful decor and quality menu ingredients is wasted if a comparable investment in properly trained staff — both management and frontline workers — is not made.

2) Management sets low expectations and accepts low standards: It is shocking how many times customers at top-of-the-line establishments who make polite complaints or point out improvements that could be made are told, "This is Jordan; this is the best we can do." This is neither true nor acceptable. We certainly better change this attitude if we expect foreign tourists to pay international standard rates for the privilege of visiting our country. It is the proprietor's responsibility to set proper standards and to give employees the training and other resources needed to achieve and maintain them. We need to start putting the right person in the right job, with proper job responsibilities and standards and taking the decision to fire someone who does not uphold them. "Wasta" makes a very poor employment agency.

3) Inconsistent quality of food/service: This is one of the most frequent complaints; new establishments, especially, start off with a good quality produce and service for the price but

standards fall as time goes on, even as the place becomes more fashionable. Long established restaurants also may offer inconsistent quality within their menu offerings and from one visit to the next. The fact that the people who frequent these establishments can "afford" to pay high prices is no justification for taking their money without giving them the standard of experience they have been promised. Solving this takes long-term commitment from the highest levels of management/investors in their hiring, training and quality-control management.

4) Poorly trained "frontline" staff: Complaints in this area include lack of general good manners; ignorance of service etiquette; poor attitude, lack of respect, especially towards local guests; untidy personal appearance/body odours; lack of language skills; lack of knowledge of dishes on the menu/services offered by the establishment. All of these problems could be solved if establishments were run by professional hospitality managers who understand that these staff are the most important people in the industry, who directly affect their business reputation and repeat clientele. Again, investing in human resources — the proper hiring, training and compensation of frontline staff — is a critical part of the solution. Creating a sense of employee loyalty with pride and enjoyment in their work is reflected in the quality of service they will deliver.

5) Guests, themselves, don't know what to expect or how to behave: If customers have been treated with contempt (high prices, poor quality offerings, misleading menu descriptions, ill-maintained facilities, indifferent service) long enough by enough service providers, they cannot be expected to behave like loyal or happy customers. When faced with a good quality service, they may not know how to play their part in the host-customer relationship or may be distrustful and ill at ease. On the other

hand, if customers do not complain or protest poor treatment, owners and managers have no incentive to change. (That is why I started "Grumpy Gourmet".)

The solutions: enlightened, professional management; investment in proper training and treatment of employees; and the institution of quality control measures cut across all of the problems facing the tourism and hospitality business in Jordan. Focusing on merely increasing our capacity (hotel rooms, restaurant outlets, tour buses), expanding our attractions (baptism sites along the River Jordan) and on encouraging more foreign visitors to come could be a recipe for disaster if we do not mind our Ps and Qs by dramatically increasing the number of training resources and improving the quality of training for frontline services staff. This requires a coordinated, long-term planning and implementation that should involve the government, private investors and operators and perhaps a non-governmental body representing the customer's interests.

It is a well-known maxim of the hospitality industry that you need 10 happy customers to offset the damaged reputation caused by one unhappy customer (who will likely complain to 10 others).

Let's learn from our most loyal, local customers and take steps to remedy the root causes before we open our doors to the millions of millennium visitors who could make or break Jordan's name around the world. And let's give some respect and incentives to our local customers, who, after all, will still be here and, we hope, patronising our establishments long after the year 2000 passes.

The author is publisher and managing director of "Grumpy Gourmet" magazine and contributed this commentary to the Jordan Times. Comments can be directed to e-mail: grumpy@grumpygourmet.com

Very Special Letters' from Very special

I look 'Very Special' as a collection of letters by the late Tawfiq Al-Hakim, one of Egypt's most famous writers, who was killed in Arab World's civil war. Below, we present a selection of his letters, which explain his personal reasons for wanting to expose the world to the truth.

'He preferred to hang out the Latin Quarter, the study for his PhD. It cost him his degree, but shaped his future as a playwright'

wishes studying Paris, he our in ti and stud night-lif capital. degree. Later, he great fur lished a Go ed to Go Hakim thinker. hugely p above a reveals, f being.

Eco-activists turn up the heat

By Ed Vulliamy

FEW PEOPLE in America have heard of, let alone read, the magazine. But last month's issue of *Live Wild or Die* delivered an eco-terrorist manifesto that has come to a smoking climax in the ski town of Vail, Colorado.

The young man in rainbow boots handing over a copy of the magazine in a San Francisco cafe last week said its warnings to 'earth rapers' and 'animal abusers' of a new 'pro-ecology revolution' against the 'Death Industries' may sound just like 'cool talk, but it's for real, man. You only have to read their papers.'

He was referring to the newspapers of mainstream America which have been reporting the country's biggest ever eco-terrorist outrage — the setting of seven fires which ravaged Vail, the playground of the super-rich with its slopes splattered with villas and ski chairlifts. Ross Perot has a home there. Dodi Fayed celebrated his first marriage at the mountain's peak.

Earlier this week, fires were set simultaneously at several buildings. A clear case, said the FBI, of arson, causing \$12 million worth of damage.

Then came the e-mail: 'On behalf of the lynx, five buildings and four ski lifts at Vail were reduced to ashes on the night of Sunday, October 18... Putting profits ahead of Colorado's wildlife will not be tolerated. This action is just a warning. We will be back if this greedy corporation "Vail Resorts Inc" continues to trespass into wild and unroaded areas.' It was signed the 'Earth Liberation Front'.

The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms regards ELF's claim of responsibility as legitimate, but has no suspects. The FBI's domestic terrorism section is searching for the arsonists.

But if the identity of the arsonists is not clear, their motives are. The attack comes barely a week after a court dismissed a legal challenge by local environmentalists to stop further grand-scale development in what is already America's most expansive skiing area. The first trees were felled last weekend.

The environmentalists pitted against Vail Resorts, the principal developer, argued that

the planned development would jeopardise a programme for the re-introduction of lynx into the area. But after the arson attack, wildlife groups were quick to disassociate themselves from what the authorities are calling 'the most expensive act of eco-terrorism to date.'

And like the FBI, they are asking themselves: who are the Earth Liberation Front?

A portrait of the organisation behind the Vail attack — and its origins — emerged this weekend in the diners and coffee houses of the San Francisco underground. Militant supporters of the ELF revealed the story of a two-decade war between the authorities and the revolutionary environmental movement that spawned their group.

These people are led by man in his early thirties who calls himself 'Voice from the Siskiyou.' They speak cautiously, insisting on anonymity and in deadly earnest. The atmosphere in the wake of the Colorado arson is uncomfortable.

Their story begins in 1979 with the founding of Earth First!, a millenarian group rooted in the holistic, counter-cultural philosophy of 'deep ecology' inspired by Utah anarchist Edward Abbey's novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*.

Its founder, David Foreman, frustrated with his job as a lobbyist for the Wilderness Society, first led the group into action in protest against a dam at Glen Canyon, Colorado, sabotaging the bulldozers — spawning the terms 'ecotage' and 'monkeywrenching.' (The group's tactics were taken up by Britain's own Earth First! movement, which was formed in 1991).

Foreman laid out the philosophy of 'ecotage,' which still propels the ELF: to bring about sufficient disruption so that 'the cost of repairs, the delays, the downtime, may be too much for the bureaucrats and exploiters to accept.'

As the movement threw itself into the campaigns to preserve north-western forests, its actions became more flamboyant, using spikes to wreck tree-felling equipment, disabling machinery and arson.

It reached its apogee in 1986 after monkeywrenchers cut powerlines to nuclear plant in

Palo Verde, Arizona. The FBI argued that this could induce a meltdown. Surveillance and harassment of Earth First! became acute.

In 1988 Earth First! fell apart. Foreman, concerned at the growing violence, ceded the leadership to Darryl Cherney and Judy Bari. They promised to make the lumber companies 'quake in their boots.' The actions against dams, loggers, ski bowls and nuclear plants became more ambitious. Meanwhile, the group was being seeded with FBI informers, and drew the wrath of the Pacific Lumber company, against which the group mounted its biggest campaign for the Headwaters Redwood forest of California.

Foreman was dragged back into the movement when arrested at his suburban Tucson home by armed FBI agents. Four others were also arrested. The FBI investigation intensified and in May 1990, at the height of the campaign to save the Redwoods, a 15-inch pipe bomb, finished with nails, exploded under the driver's seat of a Subaru belonging to Cherney and Bari. Both were injured, Bari crippled.

The incident rocked Earth First! Foreman said his movement had been 'taken over' by West Coast yuppies more interested in pursuing the wilderness within than the wilderness without.

But Earth First! continued to campaign, and won huge publicity and sympathy this summer with a court action over a lumber protest during which liquid pepper was sprayed into demonstrators' eyes. The group is now part of the Direct Action Movement, based in Eugene, Oregon, and publishes a *Direct Action Manual* — with an emphasis on non-violent sabotage.

But after the Oakland bomb, a substantial group of the 'ecoteurs' and violent militants broke away and decided to go underground, joining up with the animal rights underground, which was busy attacking vivisection laboratories and fur farms. The Earth Liberation Front was formed.

The ELF is now part of a network loosely fronted by an alliance called the Liberation Collective, based in Portland, Oregon. Factions in the collective's orbit work together to mount operations, most usually with the ELF in conjunction with the Animal Liberation



A restaurant in the Vail resort, Colorado, torched by eco-activists (AP photo)

Front.

The network, said supporters last week, is 'arrest-proof and mobile' or 'too loosely knit to catch a hold on.' In the spring of last year, however, five members of the ELF from Michigan were charged with breaking, entering and mischief after 9,000 mink were released from an Ontario fur ranch. It was the ELF's most spectacular escapade to date, though many of the mink died after turning on each other.

The ELF and ALF claimed joint responsibility for the burning of a corral in Oregon last winter, in protest against the rounding up of wild horses. Now the ELF communicates with the overground world through the Animal Liberation Front website.

This year the ELF claimed that, with the ALF, it had lit a bonfire or two at facilities which make it a daily routine to kill and destroy wildlife — two animal experiment establishments. And *Live Wild or Die* spells

out the manifesto, sealing the alliance between the ELF and ALF, that more or less predicts last weekend's arson attack in Colorado.

It states that environmental and animal rights groups have to 'learn from each other what needs to happen to make both movements a real threat to the Death Industries.' Readers are urged to coordinate 'attacks on the enemy and move beyond our supposed differences.'

The 'warriors' who have taken on the timber industry in recent months are, says the document, 'the beginning of a pro-earth, pro-animal revolutionary movement.'

It attacks 'conservative, old guard elements' in both movements who are 'resisting unification because they fear change and they fear what they cannot control.'

'Economic sabotage is the only thing the earth-raping, animal-abusing scum will respond to.'

— The Observer

Books and Culture

'Very Special Letters' from a very special man

The book *'Very Special Letters'*, a collection of letters by the late Tawfiq Al Hakim, one of Egypt's foremost writers, was published in Arabic posthumously. Below, Omar Sayegh, who is currently translating the book, explains his personal reasons for wanting to expose Hakim to the wider world.

WHEN I embarked upon translating Tawfiq Al Hakim's book entitled *'Very Special Letters'*, it wasn't just because Hakim is my favourite writer, but also because he is my favourite speaker. Al Hakim was noted for his 'high brow' plays, but his novels

officials who neither bothered nor were able to do theirs even half well.

'Very Special Letters,' a collection of personal letters published posthumously, brings us even closer to the man, one of the great literary figures of the Egyptian and Arab World in the twentieth century.

It shows his nostalgia for a time when a person was judged by his/her values rather than wealth or social status, an attitude, combined with a kind of directness, which made him popular with all classes of society.

The book also reveals his sense of lost youth, for which he blames his father. Father-son relationships

figure prominently, both in his relation to his father, and his relationship to his son, who died prematurely, a death for which Hakim clearly blamed himself. We are also revealed to the daring nature of the man; how he defied his father's

wishes when, instead of studying for his PhD in Paris, he preferred to hang out in the Latin Quarter, and study the theatres and night-life of the French capital. It cost him his degree, but shaped his future as a playwright.

Later, he was to cause a great furor when he published a soliloquy dedicated to God.

Hakim was a free thinker, a prolific and hugely popular writer, but above all, as this book reveals, he was a human being, for better or for worse.

'He preferred to hang out in the Latin Quarter, than study for his PhD. It cost him his degree, but shaped his future as a playwright'

ing his ideas and thoughts for a certain end, while in his novels he stretches out his legs, and his ideas flow freely, a fact that takes Hakim closer, first to his nature and secondly to the reader.

This impression is perhaps even more apparent in his appearances on radio or TV, where he could make you feel that he was not just close to you, but that he spoke your mind. In one such appearance, he once said how he preferred a scavenger doing its job properly, to the high ranking

Notebooks from the edge

The Iraqi artist Nuha Al-Radi turned her experience of the Gulf war into a witty diary. But its humour is tempered by the pain of exile.

By Jo Glanville

DURING THE Gulf war, the Iraqi artist Nuha Al-Radi was unable to paint, read or listen to music. Instead, she began to keep a diary — something that she had never done before. These writings have now been published as *Baghdad Diaries*.

Politics inevitably figures throughout (there is a good joke about Saddam Hussein), but the focus is chiefly upon

the domestic and local details of Al-Radi's daily existence. 'I'd like people to see what's going on, to see the life and humour,' she says. 'I wanted to show everyday living, how you've got to survive. There is much black comedy in the diary. "At least Baghdad is now on the map," she wrote on the eighth day of the war. "I will no longer have to explain where I come from." She mocks the Iraqis who flee to the countryside with their freezers loaded on pick-up trucks: "Only we would escape from a war carrying freezers full of goodies. Iraqis have been hoarders from centuries..." and makes fun of state bureaucracy: "...If we ask for a permit to die, they'll say, "come back in a week and bring all your papers with you..."'

Friends of Al-Radi say that the diary is in the spirit of her work as an artist. 'Nuha's ceramics are like her writing — insouciant, charming, witty,' says Dale Egee, who has known Al-Radi for 20 years and is currently exhibiting her etchings in a London show of modern Arab art. 'Humour is central to her art.'

In the diary, someone tells Al-Radi that her work is 'world art' as it has no barriers. Baghdad Diaries transcends cultural boundaries, too. Al-Radi wrote it in English — which comes more naturally to her than Arabic when she writes. She spent part of her childhood in India, where she had an English education, and trained at an school in London. During an air raid, she thinks that it could almost be a Philip Glass opera; on another occasion, she feels as if she's in a never-ending Indian movie.

But her cosmopolitan nature was severely tested by the war and she doubted she would ever be able to set foot in the West again. 'I'm not even sure that (the West knows) if there are ordinary human beings who live here,' she wrote. Her diary shows how quickly Baghdad disintegrated into villages; how little time it takes to destroy a modern city. After the war, life under sanctions inspired her to make a series of sculptures from car parts and stone which she called 'Embargo Art.' She refers to it as 'junk' in her diary, something with which to lighten up the hardship.

'It's impossible to work when you see disaster going on around you,' she says. 'How can you produce art and who would be expected to buy art at such a time? We artists are the first ones who go down the drain because art and artists are a luxury. This was the best way that I could find to express myself.'

An open-air exhibition of the sculptures in Jordan was well received and became an even greater metaphor of the Iraqi predicament than Al-Radi had originally intended. During the show, the detachable parts of the sculptures began to go missing. 'Every time I went, it looked a little different and more worn out,' she recalls. 'And I said, "that's exactly what our situation is in Iraq."

She is deeply saddened and indignant at the continuing plight of Iraq after eight years of sanctions. 'Everyone is leaving. You can't earn a living there and inflation is

unbelievable. There's nothing you can pick out of the situation in order to re-plant, re-grow, nourish — it's a slow death.'

Meanwhile, Al-Radi her-

self leads a nomadic existence, wandering between Beirut, London, Jordan and Iraq. She writes poignantly in her diary about the experience of exile, comparing

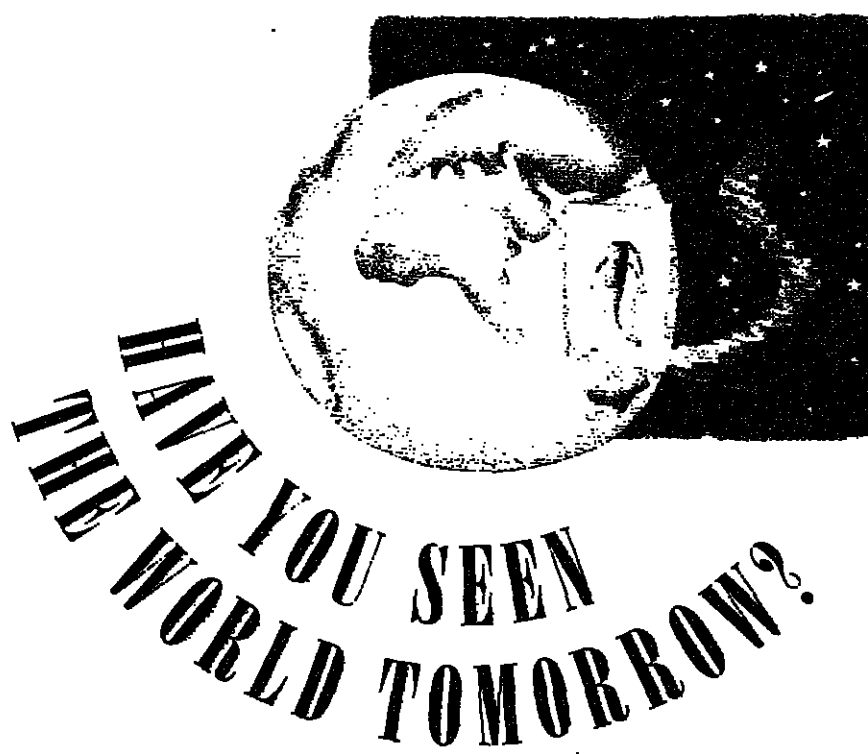
notes with fellow expatriates about the humiliation of chasing visas — 'so much effort for a licence to live.' For the moment, she has chosen Beirut as the best place of

refuge and it is from there that she will be working towards her next exhibition.

— The Independent



Nuha Al-Radi



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NOVEMBER 10-12
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'The ability to use resources makes you wealthy'

By Ghaila Alul

AMMAN — Resources are no longer the answer to attaining economic prosperity. This was a message conveyed Saturday by Harvard Business School Professor Michel Porter who stressed the importance of encouraging productivity as a prerequisite to achieving economic wealth.

"Resources are widely available...it is easy to get access to resources...but the ability to use resources makes you wealthy," Porter told

students, businesspeople and government officials during a lecture he presented at the University of Jordan yesterday.

Porter was in Amman as part of plans to introduce MBA courses with a new economic thinking at the university.

During the lecture entitled "Economic Development and the Role of Clusters," Porter said efficiency, the ability to produce goods with a higher value and domestic competition were all essential factors to improving a country's economic performance.

"Efficiency is part of a productive economy," said Porter. "But more importantly is the ability to produce products with higher value."

He called on developing countries to give up ideas that some sectors in their economies are better than others. He said technologies can be applied to all industries as long as they work towards improving productivity.

The American professor said that while political stability, a fair legal system and sound macro-

economic policies are necessary, they are not sufficient to ensure a prosperous economy. "You cannot be prosperous unless you improve the microeconomic conditions," he added. "Micro matters a lot."

He said developing countries should draw long term plans to improve the quality of inputs, create a suitable investment climate, ensure the implementation of intellectual property rights and most importantly encourage local competition.

"Firms cannot compete abroad unless they can compete at home," stressed Porter who said that competition could only be achieved through the provision of better products and more demanding and sophisticated customers.

"Demanding customers drive the improvement in products and services," said Porter.

"This is something that you [Jordan] need to build."

Porter offered the Italians as an example of the most sophisticated and

demanding customers. "The average Italian is a very sophisticated buyer of shoes. Italians know how shoes are made and they are ready to pay a high price per pair," said Porter.

Local clusters are also very important to improve a country's productivity and guarantee its efficient integration into world markets.

Using the Italian footwear cluster as an example, Porter said all supporting industries are produced locally and in one place — an economic

advantage that grants the country quick and easy access to global markets.

"You can be much more productive if you have all the suppliers right there with you," said Porter.

Reviewing findings of a global competitiveness report, Porter said that for low-income economies to prosper they should assure openness to trade and investments, encourage competition based on merit vs. corruption, develop local competition, encourage regional trade and promote the role of "new" infrastructure

namely communication and information.

Porter expressed hope that this kind of thinking can be part of the curriculum at the University of Jordan's business school.

"Business schools have a leading role in a national debate."

The professor left Amman for the Palestinian self-rule city of Nablus where he delivered a similar lecture at Al Najah University.

ECB chief expects euro zone to be hit by Asian, Russian crises in 1999

FRANKFURT (AFP) — The euro zone — the 11 European Union (EU) countries launching the European single currency — "will be affected" by the Asian and Russian crises in 1999, European Central Bank (ECB) President Wim Duisenberg has said.

Speaking at a press conference after a meeting of the ECB's governing council, Duisenberg said: "It is quite clear that the world economy will suffer from these developments in 1999 and that the euro area will also be affected to some extent."

However, "the crucial and widely debated issue is the degree to which such effects on the euro area will materialise and how long they may last," Duisenberg said.

"As matters stand, there appears to be consensus that euro area economic growth will slow down to some extent in 1999, driven largely by a weakening in net exports," the ECB chief added.

In its latest forecasts published on Oct. 21, the EU Commission revised downwards expectations for economic growth in the euro zone to 2.6 per cent in 1999, compared with an increase of 3.2 per cent predicted earlier

this year.

But "according to the same source, the slowdown is expected to be only temporary, and real gross domestic product (GDP) growth is anticipated to strengthen again in 2000, with the contribution of net trade improving," Duisenberg said.

Taking into account distorting factors, such as calendar effects, "underlying developments in euro area-wide real GDP have remained fairly stable," Duisenberg said. "Economic expansion was broadly unchanged in the first half of 1998 from the solid growth seen in the second half of 1997."

Also, "at this juncture, data partly available for the summer months point to the possibility that recent rates of output growth may be broadly sustained beyond the first half of this year," the president said.

Meanwhile, the 15 African countries using the CFA franc will benefit from next year's introduction of Europe's common currency, to which it will be pegged, experts from both continents told a conference in the Ivorian economic capital.

Despite repeated assurances, West African leaders and market players have for

months speculated nervously over whether France will continue to guarantee the CFA franc after Jan. 1 1999, when the euro is introduced.

Representatives of the French treasury, the European Commission and the eight-member West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), said trading in euros will improve access to 290 million European consumers and limit losses borne through currency exchange.

The CFA franc, used by some 80 million people in 15 African economies, is currently guaranteed by the French treasury and linked to the French franc. Once the euro is introduced, it will retain its value but be linked to the euro.

"Our currency will remain pegged and does not call for a change in the exchange rate," said Ivorian Finance Minister Niamien N'Goran.

The euro has advantages over the franc," said Lionel Zinsou, associate manager of Rothschild Bank, explaining that the euro could become the main currency for commerce in the franc zone, which will in turn reduce the risks associated with varying exchange rates.

Cash crops such as cocoa, of which Ivory Coast is the world's leading exporter, are currently quoted in sterling, paid for in CFA francs, and contractually negotiated in dollars, Zinsou pointed out.

Trading in euros would effectively eliminate the risks associated with three different currencies and could boost profits, he said.

Philippe de Fontaine-Vive, assistant director of the French treasury, predicted that investor confidence in the euro would buoy the CFA franc zone, thereby spurring much needed investment.

Saudi Arabia sees 'no alternative' to foreign investment

RIYADH (R) — Oil-dependent Saudi Arabia has no choice but to encourage investment from foreign companies as it seeks to diversify its economy, Crown Prince Abdullah said in remarks published Saturday.

"Indeed, the kingdom has no alternative but to diversify and develop the sources of national income by expanding investment channels, opening doors for international companies and offering them lucrative incentives," he told the Saudi throne told two sister newspapers in the kingdom.

"We are confident that our country has all the potentials for attracting capital and ensuring its protection and stability," he told the Saudi Gazette and Okaz dailies.

Saudi Arabia, which depends on oil for about three-quarters of its revenues, has been under pressure from weak oil prices this year as they have plunged to 10-year lows.

Alongside foreign capital, Prince Abdullah said new regulations and incentives were also aimed at encouraging "the flow of national capital" — a reference to attracting back some of the billions of dollars of private Saudi funds held abroad.

He did not specify what the new measures were.

The kingdom has been seeking to expand its non-oil economy.

In October, Saudi officials said rules to attract foreign investment, including cutting red tape and offering tax breaks, would be announced by the end of the

year.

Foreign capital can be invested without Saudi participation, but it does not qualify for many existing incentives.

Efforts to attract foreign investment were high on the agenda of Prince Abdullah's landmark tour of Europe, Asia and the United States, which ended last month.

"I invited the countries I visited to participate in setting up medium and heavy industries and to participate essentially in the petroleum industries, in petrochemical products and mining industries — as they represent the best future alternatives to the previous practice of concentrating on small-scale consumer industries," he said. Prince Abdullah's six-week trip included Britain, France, the United States, China, Japan, South Korea and Pakistan.

He said foreign oil firms had been receptive to the kingdom's steps to encourage more investment.

"I have discussed these new policies with major international oil companies, industrial companies, and experts in Japan, the United States, France, Britain and others," he said. "I found them quite willing and ready to redouble their investments here, and enter into new productive ventures."

Despite initial speculation during Prince Abdullah's trip that Saudi Arabia could open up some key upstream activities, industry officials said foreign investors would be denied any role in exploring for and producing oil and gas.

Exchange Rates Saturday, 07-11-98

CURRENCY	JORDAN DINAAR	US DOLLAR	EURO	BRITISH POUND	GERMAN MARK	FRANCE FRANC	ITALY LIRA	SPAIN PESA	NETHERLANDS GILDER	SWITZERLAND FRAN	AUSTRIA SCHILLING	CANADA DOLLAR	EURO
JORDAN DINAAR	1.0000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8778	1.8390	0.1844	2.3436	0.2067	0.7000	0.1844	2.3436	0.2067	0.7000
SAUDI RYAL	5.2980	1.0000	1.0212	9.9491	9.7429	1.0302	12.4164	1.0693	3.7510	1.0302	12.4164	1.0693	3.7510
U.A.E. DIRHAM	5.1881	0.9793	1.0000	9.7427	9.5408	1.0088	12.1589	1.0728	3.6720	1.0088	12.1589	1.0728	3.6720
BAHRAIN DINAR	0.5325	0.1006	0.1026	1.0000	0.9793	0.1036	1.2480	0.1101	0.3770	0.1036	1.2480	0.1101	0.3770
QATAR RYAL	0.5438	0.1026	0.1046	1.0212	1.0000	0.1057	1.2744	0.1124	0.3860	0.1057	1.2744	0.1124	0.3860
KUWAIT DINAR	5.1429	0.9707	0.9913	9.8578	9.6577	1.0000	12.0530	1.0632	3.6412	1.0000	12.0530	1.0632	3.6412
LIBANON LIRA	0.4267	0.0805	0.0822	0.8013	0.7847	0.0830	1.0000	0.0682	0.3021	0.0830	1.0000	0.0682	0.3021
EGYPT POUND	4.8370	0.9130	0.9323	9.0833	8.8951	0.9405	11.3560	1.0000	3.4246	0.9405	11.3560	1.0000	3.4246
LIBANON LIRA	21.4831	4.0549	4.1408	40.3427	39.5065	4.1772	50.3478	4.4414	152.1000	4.1772	50.3478	4.4414	152.1000
US DOLLAR	1.4124	2.6868	2.7222	2.6524	2.6974	2.7745	3.3102	3.2920	1.0000	2.7745	3.3102	3.2920	1.0000
NETHERLANDS GILDER	0.8505	0.1605	0.1638	1.5870	1.5638	0.1654	1.9831	0.1758	0.6021	0.1654	1.9831	0.1758	0.6021
GERMAN MARK	2.3530	0.4460	0.4555	4.4374	4.3455	0.4595	5.5379	0.4685	1.5780	0.4595	5.5379	0.4685	1.5780
FRANCE FRANC	1.9470	0.3675	0.3753	3.6563	3.5805	0.3786	4.5531	0.4025	1.3765	0.3786	4.5531	0.4025	1.3765
ITALY LIRA	7.5256	1.4860	1.5277	14.8838	14.5753	1.5411	18.5750	1.6386	5.6115	1.5411	18.5750	1.6386	5.6115
JAPAN YEN	1.6815	0.3174	0.3241	3.1577	3.0922	0.3270	3.9407	0.3476	1.1905	0.3270	3.9407	0.3476	1.1905
HOLLAND GILDER	2.6867	0.5033	0.5140	5.0077	4.9039	0.5185	6.2498	0.5513	1.8800	0.5185	6.2498	0.5513	1.8800
NETHERLANDS GILDER	11.0367	2.0832	2.1273	20.7257	20.2951	2.1460	25.8556	2.2817	7.5140	2.1460	25.8556	2.2817	7.5140
ITALY LIRA	23.3757	4.4122	4.5095	43.8899	42.9870	4.5452	54.7832	4.8327	15.5500	4.5452	54.7832	4.8327	15.5500
NETHERLANDS GILDER	48.7571	9.2978	9.3978	91.5501	89.6623	9.4804	114.2688	10.0800	34.5000	9.4804	114.2688	10.0800	34.5000
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.2332	0.4196	0.4285	4.1750	4.0885	0.4323	5.2104	0.4598	1.5741	0.4323	5.2104	0.4598	1.5741
NETHERLANDS GILDER	3.9543	0.7483	0.7641	7.4444	7.2501	0.7708	9.2906	0.8196	2.8007	0.7708	9.2906	0.8196	2.8007
NETHERLANDS GILDER	2.8782	0.5433	0.5548	5.4050	5.2930	0.5597	6.7454	0.5950	2.0378	0.5597	6.7454	0.5950	2.0378
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	16.5607	3.1258	3.1920	31.0991	30.4545	3.2201	38.8117	3.4238	11.7250	3.2201	38.8117	3.4238	11.7250
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1853	0.4087	0.4173	4.0661	3.9818	0.4210	5.0745	0.4478	1.5330	0.4210	5.0745	0.4478	1.5330
EURO	1.2026	0.2270	0.2318	2.2583	2.2115	0.2338	2.8164	0.2485	0.8514	0.2338	2.8164	0.2485	0.8514

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAAR

CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	EURO	BRITISH POUND	GERMAN MARK	FRANCE FRANC	ITALY LIRA	NETHERLANDS GILDER	SWITZERLAND FRAN	AUSTRIA SCHILLING	CANADA DOLLAR	EURO
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.8808	0.5977	0.7254	0.1782	0.8400	0.5297	0.6423	1.1745	0.6021	1.1745
EURO	0.6021	1.0000	0.5597	0.6782	0.1654	0.8400	0.5297	0.6423	1.1745	0.6021	1.1745
BRITISH POUND	1.6815	3.1748	1.0000	1.2136	0.3174	1.0000	1.9831	1.0728	1.0000	1.6815	3.1748
GERMAN MARK	5.6115	9.9195	3.3542	4.0707	1.0000	4.7136	2.9732	3.3033	6.5910	5.6115	9.9195
FRANCE FRANC	119.0500	197.7182	71.1506	86.3620	21.2154	1.0000	63.0561	719.3353	139.6421	119.0500	197.7182
NETHERLANDS GILDER	2.6867	3.1356	1.1285	1.3898	0.3365	1.5859	1.0000	11.4079	2.0378	2.6867	3.1356
SWITZERLAND FRAN	7.5256	12.9775	4.6707	5.6855	1.3926	6.5636	4.1388	47.2145	9.1775	7.5256	12.9775
ITALY LIRA	16.5500	27.4822	9.8924	12.0058	2.8493	13.8017	8.7658	100.0000	1.9000	16.5500	27.4822
NETHERLANDS GILDER	34.5000	57.3508	20.5336	25.0417	6.5157	28.9962	18.2639	208.5801	40.5403	34.5000	57.3508
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	1.9741	2.6142	0.9409	1.1419	0.2805	1.3222	0.8337	8.5109	1.8493	1.9741	2.6142
NETHERLANDS GILDER	2.2332	3.6814	1.2775	1.5751	0.4025	2.3578	1.4988	16.9588	3.2920	2.2332	3.6814
NETHERLANDS GILDER	2.0378	3.3844	1.2181	1.4783	0.3431	1.7117	1.0703	12.3130	2.3044	2.0378	3.3844
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	11.7250	18.4729	7.0084	8.5058	2.0885	9.8486	6.2103	70.8459	13.7175	11.7250	18.4729
CANADA DOLLAR	1.5330	2.5480	0.9163	1.1121	0.2732	1.2877	0.8120	8.2628	1.8005	1.5330	2.5480
EURO	0.8514	1.4140	0.5089	0.6176	0.1517	0.7152	0.4510	5.1446	1.0000	0.8514	1.4140

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST CLOSE	CHANGE
FRANKFURT	DAX	4811.60	4841.72	-30.12
HONG KONG	HANG SENG	10138.75	10221.38	-82.63
LONDON	FTSE 100	5491.00	5491.00	0.00
NEW YORK	DJ INDUSE	8015.47	8015.47	0.00
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	582.18	582.18	0.00
NEW YORK	AMEX COMPOSITE	688.02	688.02	0.00
NEW YORK	S&P 500	1133.68	1133.68	0.00
TOKYO	NIKKEI 225	14121.87	14341.37	-219.50
PARIS	CAC 40	3388.68	3398.18	-9.50
FRANKFURT	COMIBERANK	4511.20	4502.40	8.80

PRECIOUS METALS

METAL	ASK	BID
GOLD	293.00	293.50
SILVER	5.02	5.05
PLATINUM	339.50	341.50

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- Not less than 35 years old.
- Jordanian nationality.

Those who are interested, should enclose their CVs with their application and other documents before 30/11/1998 to:

President of Jordan Insurance Federation
P.O. Box 1990, Amman - Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Vivacious plant
- Scour
- Huff and puff
- Southernmost Great Lake
- Extinct Arawak tribe
- Stringed instrument
- Top point
- Homer
- Once around the track
- Types of sts.
- Singer Vic
- Outstanding
- Business abbr.
- Purloined
- Period of the Mesozoic era
- European sea eagle
- Transparent wrap
- Architect
- Saunier
- Went first
- Tennis co-over
- Bern's river
- Writer Hunter
- Earl "Fat" — "Thin Man"
- Dog in "The Thin Man"
- Package
- Alternate way
- Charged particles
- Mrs. Fintstone
- Garden gnome, e.g.
- Birthday party dessert
- Org. of Player and Woods
- Homer
- Pickle choice
- Hidious creature
- Bedding down
- Suckered
- Maternal
- College V.I.P.s
- Sicilian volcano

DOWN

- Repast
- Puget Sound
- Homer
- Visualize
- Cat or Ray
- Antic
- Journalist
- Jacob August
- Chapel Hill sch.
- Maine college
- Spot
- Car
- British gun
- Father of France
- gvs
- Imitate
- Caps or glob ending?
- Packing case
- 1990-92 French Open champion
- Roman fountain of song
- Prevailing force
- Homer
- Angry
- Reel builder
- False name
- Thumbs down on both
- Sweetened
- Volleyball players, at times
- Upper limb
- Sound defeat
- Pub pint
- Rouse
- Pollution woe
- Buster Brown's dog
- Taj Mahal site
- Concluding musical section
- Highland valley
- Alan or Robert
- Easy dessert?
- Expected

Peanuts

LET'S COMPARE NOTES, SIR, AND SEE IF WE'VE GOT THE SAME ANSWERS...

"TRUE, FALSE, MAYBE, WHO KNOWS? WHY NOT? SURE, WHEN? THEY DID? SOMETIME, I DID NOT, WHO, ME? IT WAS DARK, AND EVERYONE WAS GETTING HUNGRY."

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DO IT, SIR...

NEVER LET 'EM KNOW WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM, MARCIE.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Investments shoot up by 58%

** INVESTMENT in Jordan increased by 58 per cent during the first 10 months of this year in comparison to the same period last year, the semi-official Investment Promotion Corporation has said. The managing director of the corporation, Muntasser Ogbeh, added that the money was spent on 178 projects in five sectors which benefit from tax exemptions and other incentives introduced in the investment promotion law of 1995.

Foreign investment made up 34 per cent of the total JD430 million (\$605 million), Ogbeh said. He added that 46 per cent of the foreign investment came from Gulf investors. The rest came mainly from businessmen in the United States, Canada and Japan. The sectors which benefit from the tax exemptions are industry, hospitals, agriculture, transport, maritime and railway.

New berth planned at Aqaba for exporting phosphate

** THE government plans to set up a new berth in the Red Sea port city of Aqaba to be used for phosphate exports, an official has said. The berth will be designed to serve only a joint venture between the state-run Jordan Phosphate Mines Co. (JPMC) and a Norwegian firm exporting phosphates. The joint firm is called Hydro Agri-Jordan.

will be built away from current docks used for commercial exports to curb pollution that may result from phosphate exports on the shores of Aqaba, 350 kilometres south of Amman.

He said the berth is expected to be operational in 2001. Hydro Agri-Jordan, which began production this year, produces phosphoric acid and compound fertilizers in the southern mine city of Sheldiyeh, 150 kilometres north of Aqaba.

Number of tourists rise by 12%

** More than one million tourists visited Jordan between January and September this year, a 12.6 per cent increase over the same period in 1997. A Tourism Ministry report said 63.7 per cent of the visitors to Jordan came from neighboring Arab Gulf states.

United States, Europe and other Western countries formed 26.9 per cent of the total, while Israelis made up 9.4 per cent. It said revenues from tourism in the same period also increased by 7.7 per cent to JD399.7 million (\$ 562.9 million).

Jordan begins negotiations with international consortium on constructing, operating gas pipeline

By Amy Henderson

AMMAN — Jordan Saturday began negotiating terms of agreement with an international consortium for the construction and operation of a gas pipeline. The project, part of a multi-million dollar scheme to pump liquefied natural gas from Egypt to the Kingdom via Aqaba, will be the nucleus of an intra-regional gas transport grid.

Minister of Energy Hani Mulki told the Jordan Times that the government Saturday submitted its counter proposal to Amoco-Tractabel, an American-Belgian consortium, but declined to comment on the terms sought by Jordan.

"This is a long-term project. Discussions are at a primary stage, and will set the tone for future gas consumption in the Kingdom," Mulki said. "Therefore, we do not want to prejudice the discussions at this point."

However, Mulki indicated that the government's proposal, countering one submitted by Amoco-Tractabel three months ago, sought different terms of exclusivity, distribution, tariffing and partnership.

Amoco, a premiere American oil and gas company, and Tractabel, a Belgian firm, have already secured Egyptian approval

to lay underwater pipelines from Port Said to the Suez Canal and eastwards to Jordanian waters near Aqaba — a \$500 million endeavour — and have agreed with Egypt on terms of supply.

The consortium is now seeking Jordanian consent to continue the pipeline along the Desert Highway to the Shidiyah phosphate mines, the Rashidieh cement factory and the Al Hussein Thermal Power Station in Zarqa.

According to Bruce Ericson, Amoco regional manager, a new independent power production plant at Samra, near Zarqa, would also be a major "potential customer" for natural gas.

The government this summer qualified 10 companies — among them Amoco and Tractabel — to bid for a \$500 million build, own,

operate (BOO) power generation plant to accommodate a predicted seven per cent rise in the country's electricity consumption between the years 2002 and 2006. Bidding will close on Jan. 23, 1999.

The gas pipeline project, as outlined in the consortium's proposal for Jordan, would cost some \$400 million and could meet as much as 50 per cent of the country's electricity needs until 2006. Ericson said that once a licence is secured, the lines can supply gas to Aqaba by 2001 and Amman by 2002. Ericson declined to comment further on the details of either its own proposal or that of the government.

"It is obvious that the [Jordanian] government has studied the issue and given this some thought," Ericson said. "They have put forward an interesting counter proposal with certain things we have to consider carefully and respond to. We've just started talking and we are optimistic."

Amoco-Tractabel estimates that by 2001 it can supply 100 million cubic feet per day, a figure that will increase to roughly 300 million cubic feet per day, or roughly 30 per cent of the country's energy needs, by 2006.

The project should eventually supply neighbouring countries with gas, with an emphasis on the West Bank, Syria and Lebanon, and effectively replaces an earlier initiative by the American firm Enron to market Qatari gas in the region and to supply Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian self rule territories via a regasification and storage plant at Aqaba. The deal collapsed in late

1996 when Israel terminated a letter of intent to buy gas exclusively from Qatar. The termination of the letter was presumed to be in retaliation of Qatar's own decision to freeze emerging official relations with the Jewish state — a move linked to stagnation in the peace process.

Mulki said that exporting gas to Israel had not yet been discussed, but has not been discounted as a possibility.

"We have to talk about exporting gas, not specifically to this or that country, but generally," he said. "This is also something that has to be agreed upon by all parties. Egypt as the supplier and Amoco-Tractabel as the transporter."

Negotiations resume Monday.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A magical thing could happen today. A problem you've been trying to solve might just heal itself. A beautiful grand trine in water signs brings miracles closer to home, and that's where yours is most likely to happen. So, that's where you should be hanging out. Don't just wait for it, either. Ask for it, then do what's appropriate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Entertaining friends will be a joy today, partially because of work you've already done. Your preparations have been extensive, and today that's going to show you off in a beautiful light. People always wonder how you manage so smoothly. You don't have to tell them about the tizzy you were in only a couple days ago.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You could be the recipient of a lovely gift today. It's something you've earned, so don't turn it down. It may not be material, however. It could be praise, or acknowledgement for something you've done. If anything like that comes along, make sure that you accept it graciously.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) This is a magical day for you. There's a beautiful grand trine in water signs, and it's sending all its wonderful energy in your direction. Everything is pointing toward abundance, and it's all pointing toward you as well. It doesn't get much better than this. Your intuition should be excellent, too, so if you get a whim, follow it!

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You're feeling strong today, but don't let it go to your head. You'd be much wiser to be a follower rather than a leader right now. A person you know and love has an agenda all scoped out. All you have to do is what ever you're old. That's not easy for a Leo, but this time, just relax and enjoy it.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This should be a fascinating and inspirational day for you. The lesson you're learning is about friendship and family. It might even be about forgiveness and trusting your own intuition. Say what you need to say in a way that's supportive, rather than critical. The difference is in the delivery.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) A potentially difficult

situation could turn out to be rewarding. It's as if there's a test on how well you empathize, how well you can listen to someone else's problem without getting involved or trying to fix it. Instead, just support the other person in finding his or her own solution. You'll see. It'll work out magnificently.


SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Your intuition is right on target. You might even scare yourself with how well you can guess the future. It's not guessing, actually. It's more like seeing, and then creating it to happen the way you want it to go. This story does have a happy ending, and it's because you're writing it and acting in it simultaneously.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This would be a great day to have people over to your house. One person in particular thinks you're really neat. You may know who it is already, or maybe you can figure it. Have that person over, just to listen to music or watch a movie. There's not much talking involved with this relationship, but it's very nurturing.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You'll be learning today, and it should be lots of fun. You tend to learn things the hard way, but that won't be the case today. It might be so easy it doesn't even seem like learning, but pay attention anyway. You'll find, by tomorrow, you're able to do something that was beyond you this morning.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Looks like you could find a job that's better than your current one. Did you look through the want ads yet? You may not even be seeking a new job, but why not? You've got nothing to lose, and you might find something really exciting. Right now, conditions are perfect for financial abundance and excellence in leadership.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Love's in the air today, but it's not just the love that lovers share. It's the love of a mother and a child, the love of a boy and his dog, the love of Speed Racer and his car. It's the love for whatever is fun in your life. You want to throw yourself into the thick of it, and you hereby have permission!

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARISANI											
TELEPHONE: 5607171 / 5607172											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 07/11/1998											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
\$ 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	16.9	.97	22	520	107640	206.50	207.00	.50+	
\$ 1.920	1.500	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.2	4.32	10	2102	3411	1.67	1.62	.05-	
\$ 5.000	2.600	CAIRO AMMAN BANK	10.6	2.92	1	400	1028	2.71	2.57	.14-	
\$ 6.510	2.610	THE HOUSING BK.	17.7	3.58	42	50100	140243	2.79	2.79	-	
\$ 3.390	1.680	JOR. KUMAT BANK	1.1	0.00	11	2365	3978	1.68	1.70	.02+	
\$ 4.780	.530	JOR. GULF BANK	9	0.00	9	9100	5911	.64	.65	.01+	
\$ 4.190	1.900	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	42.7	2.38	1	5000	10500	2.10	2.10	-	
\$ 3.810	1.540	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.7	0.00	11	1841	2850	1.57	1.54	.03-	
\$ 3.880	1.350	JOR. INV. FTM. BANK	21.5	3.57	2	1398	1957	1.40	1.40	-	
\$.850	.590	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	P	0.00	2	1000	600	.61	.60	.01-	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 272.60 %CHG: +0.09		114	73926	278333				
\$ 2.630	1.200	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	9	0.00	2	950	1349	1.50	1.42	.08-	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 125.45 %CHG: -0.38		2	950	1349				
\$ 2.240	1.410	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.2	5.81	19	3362	4793	1.42	1.42	-	
\$ 7.460	1.800	VEHICLE OWNERS FED.	7.8	6.35	2	900	1651	1.80	1.89	.09+	
\$ 2.500	1.190	SHIPPING LINES	40.3	7.02	1	250	285	1.19	1.14	.05-	
\$ 1.120	.680	REAL ESTATE INV.	13.7	0.00	1	200	140	.71	.70	.01-	
\$ 1.340	1.050	MID. EAST HOTELS	P	0.00	1	1000	1040	1.05	1.04	.01-	
\$ 4.600	1.870	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.4	2.12	6	3150	5957	1.90	1.89	.01-	
\$.990	.860	ZAKKA EDUCATION	19.6	0.00	3	650	555	.86	.85	.01-	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 102.65 %CHG: -0.41		33	9512	14430				
4.110	1.050	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	12.3	0.00	62	35200	40426	1.14	1.16	.02+	
6.500	3.300	ARAB POTASH CO.	16.2	6.06	3	1950	6483	3.40	3.30	.10-	
11.250	10.050	JOR. PETROL. REFINARY	9.9	8.73	13	1525	15524	10.18	10.18	-	
\$ 5.740	2.400	ARAB PHARM. GROUP	7.0	2.96	10	2995	7610	2.55	2.53	.02-	
\$ 3.390	1.040	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	8.9	9.26	6	984	1063	1.09	1.08	.01-	
2.980	1.700	ARAB ALUM. IND.	12.9	14.29	1	300	525	1.75	1.75	-	
.520	.280	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	1	100	30	.30	.30	-	
1.760	.760	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	10.2	8.00	7	7550	7857	1.05	1.00	.05-	
\$ 1.950	.630	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MFAC	30.5	0.00	9	1500	975	.65	.65	-	
.660	.360	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM.	6.8	0.00	9	6500	2340	.37	.36	.01-	
1.470	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	12.9	5.13	11	2400	2815	1.20	1.17	.03-	
.640	.370	KANTHER INVEST.	9	0.00	2	300	114	.37	.36	.01+	
\$ 1.240	.530	UNIV. MODN. IND.	9.7	9.84	4	2020	1227	.60	.61	.01+	
.840	.400	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	9	0.00	14	3700	1554	.43	.42	.01-	
1.080	.600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	8.5	16.67	9	5500	3302	.60	.60	-	
\$ 1.310	.910	INTL. TOBACCO	7.7	5.30	10	2800	3080	1.10	1.10	-	
.890	.460	JORDAN STEEL	9.5	8.24	2	250	214	.85	.85	-	
.730	.580	NAT. ALUMINIUM	33.2	0.00	7	5750	3853	.66	.67	.01+	
.670	.520	MID. EAST COMPLEX	9.6	0.00	1	1000	530	.53	.53	-	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 70.30 %CHG: -1.11		181	82324	99218				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 162.40 %CHG: -0.20		330	166712	393330				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 07/11/1998											
\$ 1.050	.790	EXPORT & FIN. BKR. 757	10.4	0.00	4	2500	1400	.81	.81	-	
\$ 1.230	1.000	ISLAMIC INSURANCE CO	P	0.00	1	250	315	1.20	1.26	.06+	
\$.490	.270	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	1	100	29	.28	.29	.01+	
\$.480	.270	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	1	200	72	.36	.36	-	
\$.780	.500	UNION INV.	9	0.00	15	46750	26043	.55	.56	.01+	
\$.740	.560	AL-DAMLIYAH	33.4	0.00	3	700	399	.57	.57	-	
\$ 2.220	.950	CENTURY INV. GROUP	9	0.00	9	500	485	.95	.97	.02+	
\$.190	.080	JOR. IND. MATCH-JEMCO	9	0.00	7	17100	2394	.14	.14	-	
\$.600	.270	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	1	2550	765	.30	.30	-	
\$.430	.200	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	23.0	0.00	9	13250	2650	.21	.20	.01-	
\$.580	.220	NATL. MULT. ENG. MARICO	9	0.00	35	155400	39305	.25	.25	-	
\$.690	.470	MID-EST PHARM. 902	8	0.00	8	9842	3838	.49	.49	-	
\$ 2.240	1.210	UNION TOBACCO	12.6	6.32	2	750	1695	2.24	2.26	.02+	
\$.720	.570	RAST PHARM.	9	0.00	1	500	285	.57	.57	-	
\$.320	.190	IND. ENG.	9	0.00	5	6800	1466	.22	.22	-	
\$.660	.300	IND. CERAMIC	9.7	0.00	40	132	33	.33	.33	-	
\$.500	.250	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9.0	0.00	10	1775	723	.53	.53	-	
\$.620	.430	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	2	6150	3321	.54	.54	-	
\$.950	.310	OPTICAL HEARING CO.	P	0.00	2	450	144	.32	.32	-	
\$ 1.310	.610	NUTRIDAR	10.0	0.00	14	8500	670	.67	.67	.01-	
\$ 1.000	.680	AL-FEHAL PRINTING CO	11.1	10.38	3	2000	1460	.74	.73	.01-	
GRAND TOTAL					126	28362	99018				

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Kuwait bids for championships

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The Kuwait Amateur Athletic Federation (KAAF) said Friday it will bid to host the under-16 world athletics championship in 2002, as well as the Asian senior athletics championship in 2000. "We are confident of staging the two events successfully, because we are sure of our ability to do so," said KAAF President Abdullah Al Mussalem. "We've proven in the past, both from a technical and administrative standpoint, that we are able to stage such big events," he said. Kuwait hosted the Asian athletics championships in 1983.

Karembu faces injury blow

MADRID (AFP) — French World Cup star Christian Karembu faces a two-month injury lay-off after a training accident at Real Madrid, the Spanish club said. Karembu, the former Nantes and Sampdoria player, ruptured a cruciate ligament in his right knee after a collision with teammate Fernando Morientes this week. The club doctors said they would monitor the injury for 48 hours before deciding on how to treat it.

Cuba too strong for South Korea

TOKYO (R) — Cuba's women volleyball team, playing in the words of an opposition coach like men, swept through their opening quarter-final group match at the world championships on Saturday. The defending champions beat South Korea 15-8 15-2 15-5. "They played like men," said South Korean coach Kim Hyung Sil. "It's almost impossible to defend against their attack. There was simply nothing we could do." The top two teams from each of the six-team quarter-final pools qualify for the semifinals. Russia, playing in the opposite group to Cuba, came from behind to beat Japan 16-17 15-7 15-5 15-8 win. Asian champions China, surprisingly beaten by South Korea in an earlier round, beat Italy 15-3 15-8 15-5.

TSV coach banned

BONN (R) — TSV 1860 coach Werner Lorant will have to watch Saturday's top-of-the-table Munich derby against Bayern from the stands. The German Soccer Federation fined Lorant 20,000 marks (\$12,030) and suspended him for one match on Friday after he swore at a referee. Lorant was punished for his behaviour towards match official Lutz-Michael Froehlich in the 1-1 draw at Bayer Leverkusen on October 24.

Marseille score last-gasp winner

PARIS (R) — Florian Maurice scored two minutes into injury time to give 10-man Olympique Marseille a dramatic 1-0 home win over Monaco that put them five points clear at the top of the French first division on Friday. Marseille were a man short for an hour after midfielder Peter Lucin was sent off in the first half for a dangerous tackle on Monaco's Bosnian defender Muhamed Konjic. Second-placed Girondins Bordeaux play at home to Toulouse on Saturday. Marseille are 10 points ahead of fourth-placed Monaco. The match looked set for a 0-0 stalemate when a backheel by France's Robert Pires sent Tijsje clear on the left inside the box. The Guinea striker pulled the ball back for Maurice to shoot home. Goalkeeper Fabien Barthez and defender Franck Lasmas. Bastia beat Lorient 2-1 at home in Friday's other match.

FIFA freezes Cameroon federation

ZURICH (AP) — FIFA has dissolved the Cameroon soccer federation following a "series of recurrent problems," the world governing body said Friday. Following a FIFA team's visit to the African country in September and October, FIFA appointed eight officials to a 12-member interim executive and called on the Cameroon authorities to nominate the remaining four officials. Last year, FIFA warned Cameroon it could be suspended from all international competition, including the World Cup, if it didn't pay overdue wages to one of its former players. The world body notified FECAFOOT Oct. 16 of the move to dissolve the existing administrative body, elected in 1996.

Brosius agrees to 3-year deal

NEW YORK (AFP) — World Series Most Valuable Player Scott Brosius has reportedly agreed to a three-year, \$15.75 million deal that will keep him with the New York Yankees. The New York Times reported the deal Friday, but Yankees spokesman Jason Zillo would not immediately confirm it. Brosius, who made \$2.5 million in 1998, enjoyed an almost fairy-tale season for the Yankees, batting .300 with 19 homers and 98 RBIs and making his first All-Star appearance. He hit a mere .203 in 1997 for the Oakland Athletics. The 32-year-old Oregon native hit four homers in the postseason and batted .471 in the four-game sweep of the San Diego Padres in the World Series. He hit a pair of home runs in Game Three, including a dramatic three-run blast off closer Trevor Hoffman in the eighth inning that gave the Yanks a 5-4 victory.

Van Hooijdonk to play for Forest

NOTTINGHAM (AFP) — Dutch rebel Pierre van Hooijdonk said Friday he is expecting an easy ride from fans when he makes his Nottingham Forest return. Forest have confirmed that Van Hooijdonk will line up in the English Premiership against Wimbledon for his first appearance since he brought his three-month one-man strike to an end. And the Dutch star believes he will receive a friendly welcome from the City Ground supporters — despite his claim before walking out on the club that Forest lacked quality and ambition. He said: "I don't think I will get a bad reception from the fans. The people in Nottingham have treated me very well since I returned to the city and I don't expect it to be any different tomorrow."

Sydney swimming event extended

SYDNEY (AFP) — The 2000 Olympic swimming programme has been extended by one day and will have semi-finals up to and including 200 metres for the first time. Australian swimming president Terry Gathercole welcomed the International Olympic Committee's move Saturday, saying a seven day programme in Sydney would have disadvantaged some swimmers. "It made it very difficult for the people who have the talent to swim one or more events," he said.

Venus Williams to resume workouts

NEW YORK (R) — Venus Williams said on Friday that she was ready to return to action after resting a sore left knee for two weeks, her sights set on finishing the year on a high note at the Chase Championships.

"In the last competition of the year, you want to win the tournament," Williams, 18, said about the elite, season-ending event at Madison Square Garden starting November 16.

"It would feel great, going out of the season and heading into the Australian. I've never had that feeling. It's something I want to capture."

Williams, ranked fifth in the world, has suffered from tendinitis in her knee but pronounced herself fit and anxious to resume training at home in Florida after a hectic one-day publicity/business stop in New York.

"I think it's time I got serious about my tennis life," Williams said between nibbles of the Carnegie Deli's All-American Venus — a veritable buffet disguised as a sandwich offering stacks of roast beef, turkey, cheese, lettuce, tomato and red pepper on whole wheat bread.

Despite claiming her first three WTA Tour titles in 1998, including the Lipton Championships and the Grand Slam Cup, and accumulating winnings of more than \$1.6 million, Williams said the season had fallen short of her expectations.

The powerfully-built American said she had wanted to claim at least one Grand Slam title. "My goal was to win, to get to the next step. I guess I failed."

Williams expressed admiration for the success of compatriot Lindsay Davenport, who beat her four of five meetings this year on the way to hoisting herself into the world number one spot.

"She just made up her mind she wanted to be there," said Williams.

"I think we both have the same game," Williams added. "In a couple of matches I made some bad decisions and a couple of matches she played better."

Williams, one of the hardest hitters and biggest servers in women's tennis, said she thought she needed to become aggressive on the court, take better advantage of short balls during rallies and get more comfortable rushing the net.

She said only one element was missing from making her matches against U.S. Open champion Davenport the fabric of a scintillating rivalry.

"If I want it to be a rivalry, I have to win more matches," Williams said. "It's up to me."

JTV denies selling Arab Games coverage rights to Future TV

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Pressed by time and lack of resources, Jordan Television, like other sectors of the Kingdom, has to shape up before next summer's 9th Pan-Arab Games to be hosted in Amman to ensure a successful event.

More than 15 Arab countries and over 3,000 athletes and officials are expected to participate in the two-week Aug. 15-31 event. Gearing up the country's facilities to accommodate and organise the mega event will prove to be a big challenge, officials say.

But according to Mouaffaq Al Fawwaz, vice president of the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC), the event — contrary to what many had hoped — will not generate a big revenue for the country.

"After meeting with officials who supervised the marketing of the Beirut Games, we realised that we should be content if we are able to cover the huge cost and make minimal profit," Fawwaz told the Jordan Times.

Jordan's television coverage of the Games, however, is expected to be the biggest generator of profit, estimated at about JD1 million.

"It is going to be a big challenge for all of us," JTV Director Nidal Dalgamouni told the Jordan Times. "But we want to do it."

Dalgamouni denied reports that JTV had sold its television broadcasting rights to the Beirut-based Future Satellite station, which covered the 1997 Games held in Lebanon.

With limited capabilities, officials at JTV say the only national TV station has the "infrastructure" for such an event, but that it needs to be improved upon.

Since the Arab Sports Federation (ASF) advanced the date of the upcoming games to 1999 instead of 2001, the Council of Arab Sports Ministers increased aid to the Kingdom to enable it to prepare infrastructure and update sports facilities.

Aid from the Arab League was raised to \$200,000 while the Council of Arab Ministers will grant \$1,000,000 instead of \$700,000.

Additional sponsorship for Jordan's bid will be garnered through lowering the 50 per cent ASF margin of profit on promotion and television coverage.

The Jordanian government will cover the remaining costs, expected to reach JD18 million covering plans for the building of a multipurpose indoor stadium with a capacity for 7,000 spectators; an

Olympic-size swimming pool; a track and field stadium and electronic timing machines.

The rest of the facilities will be utilised at private universities and educational institutions that have already expressed readiness to host some of the events.

Lebanon, which hosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to help in the construction of sports facilities destroyed during the civil war.

The Amman Games will be followed by the first Arab Paralympics.

The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

Graf moving back towards her best

LEIPZIG (AFP) — A delighted Steffi Graf breezed into the final of the \$450,000 WTA Tour event here Saturday, shrugging off a second-set lapse to beat Belgian third seed Dominique Van Roost 6-1, 3-6, 6-0.

Graf, who is competing as a non-seed at an event for the first time in 13 years, is now within touching distance of her fifth title here and her 105th overall.

Two months ago a wrist problem, the latest in a series of injuries which had led to a plunge in the rankings, had almost persuaded the 29-year-old Graf it was time to quit.

But Friday's win over Anne-Gaëlle Sidot allowed her to set a new all-time career-earnings record for a sportswoman of \$20,348,992 and she was clearly on the crest of a wave in the opening set against Van Roost.

"I just didn't expect to get so far here or my game to be so well on," said Graf, now ranked 22 in the world, after a showing which enthralled

4,000 home fans. Such was Graf's early dominance that 13th-ranked Van Roost was forced on to the back foot and into a hail of errors as she was out-thought and outmanoeuvred.

Graf made the early break and Van Roost quickly found herself 1-5 down. Graf closed out the set — albeit on her sixth set point.

In the second set Van Roost played much more aggressively with her blazing groundstrokes and attacking play at the net quickly rewarded as Graf began to lose her range with longline backhands mostly falling out.

The Belgian broke decisively to 5-3 and served out for one set-all.

"That was my own fault," admitted Graf. "I was just too passive and Dominique took advantage."

But she found an impressive second wind and broke to 2-0 in the decider before killing off her opponent with a further break to 4-0 to win in 1hr 50min.

Graf, who spent a record



German Steffi Graf returns a forehand during her match at the WTA Grand Prix tennis tournament in Leipzig. The German star set a new all-time career-earnings record for a sportswoman having won a staggering \$20,348,992 since making her debut on Oct. 18, 1982 (AFP photo)

377 weeks as world number one, now has an outside chance of reaching the Masters in New York, which she has won five times. Seven players are still chasing three places still up for grabs in the 16-strong

field. A win in the Leipzig final over either French Wimbledon finalist Nathalie Tauziat or Romania's Irina Spirlea should give her a berth. Graf has yet to lose to

either, with a 9-0 record against Tauziat and 2-0 against Spirlea.

"Both can give me a tough time. I must watch out and make sure I keep moving as well as I did today, when I felt good," said Graf.

NBA players and owners far apart; talks turn angry

NEW YORK (AP) — National Basketball Association players and owners apparently on one issue: They are far apart.

Claiming owners were making a "ludicrous" attempt to influence individual players, union director Billy Hunter said Friday after a 1 1/2-hour bargaining session that he didn't see the sides getting back together for at least a week.

Hunter and union president Patrick Ewing, who also attended the negotiating meeting, are angry commissioner David Stern has general managers and coaches starting to lobby players to accept management's proposal.

"We're miles apart," Hunter said. "They're trying to manipulate our players into thinking the proposal they have on the table is a good proposal and the players should put some leverage on Patrick and me and the negotiating committee."

Stern and deputy commissioner Russ Granik agreed that nothing was accomplished.

"The union informed us they were unable to give us a new proposal, as they had indicated earlier this week," Granik said in a statement. "We agreed that we are very far apart with no solution in sight."

On the 129th day of the lockout, Hunter said Stern had directed GMs and coaches to drive a rift into the union.

"Bad-faith bargaining. No question about it," Hunter said.

"Maybe it's just an act of desperation."

With the start of the season pushed back to mid-

December at the earliest, the sides essentially have given up bargaining for now, making it unlikely games will be played until 1999. Earlier this week, Stern charged the union leadership cow-towed to high-profile agents such as David Falk, who represents Michael Jordan and Ewing.

"Their idea is clearly to sweat out players," Hunter said.

"He wants to test my resolve and the players' resolve."

Hunter claimed efforts were under way in Boston, Cleveland, Miami and Milwaukee to get players to support the NBA's latest plan.

"Until we see some movement from them, there's not going to be any movement from us," Hunter said. "I don't think they'll be inclined to negotiate until they're done taking their toll."

In response to management's actions, Hunter said the union will meet with members next week.

"We're not going to permit the owners unfettered access to our players in an attempt to manipulate them and then not attempt to clean the record up," he said.

Players, who received 57 per cent of revenue last season, are asking for 60 per cent. The owners, who wanted to pay no more than 51.8 per cent last season, want the percentage scaled back to 50 per cent.

Hunter said he intends to turn management's tactic around on the owners.

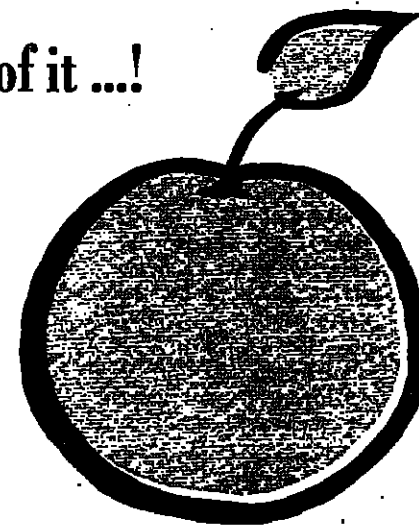
"I am going to send our proposal with a full explanation to every GM and we'll send their proposal along so they can compare the two,"

he said. In the first regular-season work stoppage in NBA history, nine more games were

lost Friday, increasing the total to 34. That's about the only thing added to the equation.

"This," Hunter said, "wasn't the time to talk about putting anything else on the table."

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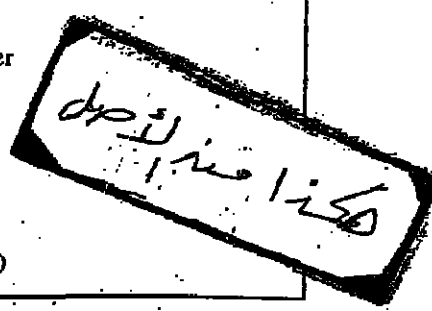
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PNA minister meets Iranian opposition chief

NICOSIA (AFP) — A minister from the Palestinian National Authority has met the leader of the main armed Iranian opposition group, the People's Mujahedeen, in Baghdad in a fresh snub to Tehran, the group said Saturday.

The Minister for Public Services Azzam Al Ahmad told Massud Rajavi that "the recent position of the Tehran regime's leaders against the people and government of Palestine clearly show that there has been no change in the clerical regime whatsoever," it said in a statement.

Ahmad said Tehran's priorities remained the "export of crisis and meddling in the internal affairs of Arab and Muslim governments" and described the People's Mujahedeen as "the only alternative for Iran and a guarantee of friendship and fraternity in the region," the statement said.

The reported meeting came after Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei attacked Palestinian President Yasser Arafat as a "traitor and a lackey of the Zionists" last month for signing the Wye River peace accord with Israel.

"This wretched man and traitor who deems himself the representative of the Palestinian people does not even deserve to be a member of the Palestinian movement," Khamenei said in the fiercest attack on Arafat by an Iranian official in well over a year.

Following Khamenei's attack, the Palestinian leader-

ship accused Tehran of sponsoring a hardline faction within the main Palestinian Islamist group Hamas.

It charged that the Iranian-backed faction was responsible for a bomb attack which killed an Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip last month and for a recent threat of violence against the Palestinian National Authority sent to news organisations in Jerusalem in the name of Hamas' armed wing.

The PNA also accused Tehran of plotting the assassination of its officials as part of its plans to sabotage implementation of the latest U.S.-brokered peace agreement.

Rajavi told Ahmad the "anti-Arafat statements and positions of the mullahs' regime" were "a blatant affront to the people of Palestine," the People's Mujahedeen statement said.

He "condemned the enmity of the leaders of the clerical regime to peace and freedom, and expressed pleasure that their terrorist conspiracies against Mr. Arafat's life have been foiled."

The People's Mujahedeen maintains thousands of fighters in bases on Iraq's border with Iran. It also maintains offices in Europe and North America from which it runs a sustained publicity campaign against the Tehran government. Iran has repeatedly criticised Western countries, including Germany, for sheltering the group's supporters.

It filed a protest with the United Nations in September over Iraq's support for the group.

Egyptian government, church look into torture allegations

SOHAG, Egypt (AP) — The interior minister summoned a top police official — and the Coptic Church called in a bishop — to look into their role in the alleged police torture of Christians in southern Egypt and media coverage of the incident.

The moves follow a murder investigation in Al Kuseh village, 400 kilometres south of Cairo, that led to the arrests of 1,200 Christians and torture of scores of them, according to Egyptian human rights groups.

Egyptian officials, already facing criticism in the West about alleged discrimination against the Christian minority, were upset at some foreign news accounts which suggested the police rampage was aimed at Copts.

The human groups noted police avoided arresting Muslims for the slaying of two Christians to avoid sparking civil strife.

But they said the issue was not a question of religion but of police torture which has been aimed at Muslims as well.

Egypt — which denies torture occurred — has since launched a media campaign,

with prominent Copts denouncing the reports as exaggerated and praising their relations with Muslim Egyptians.

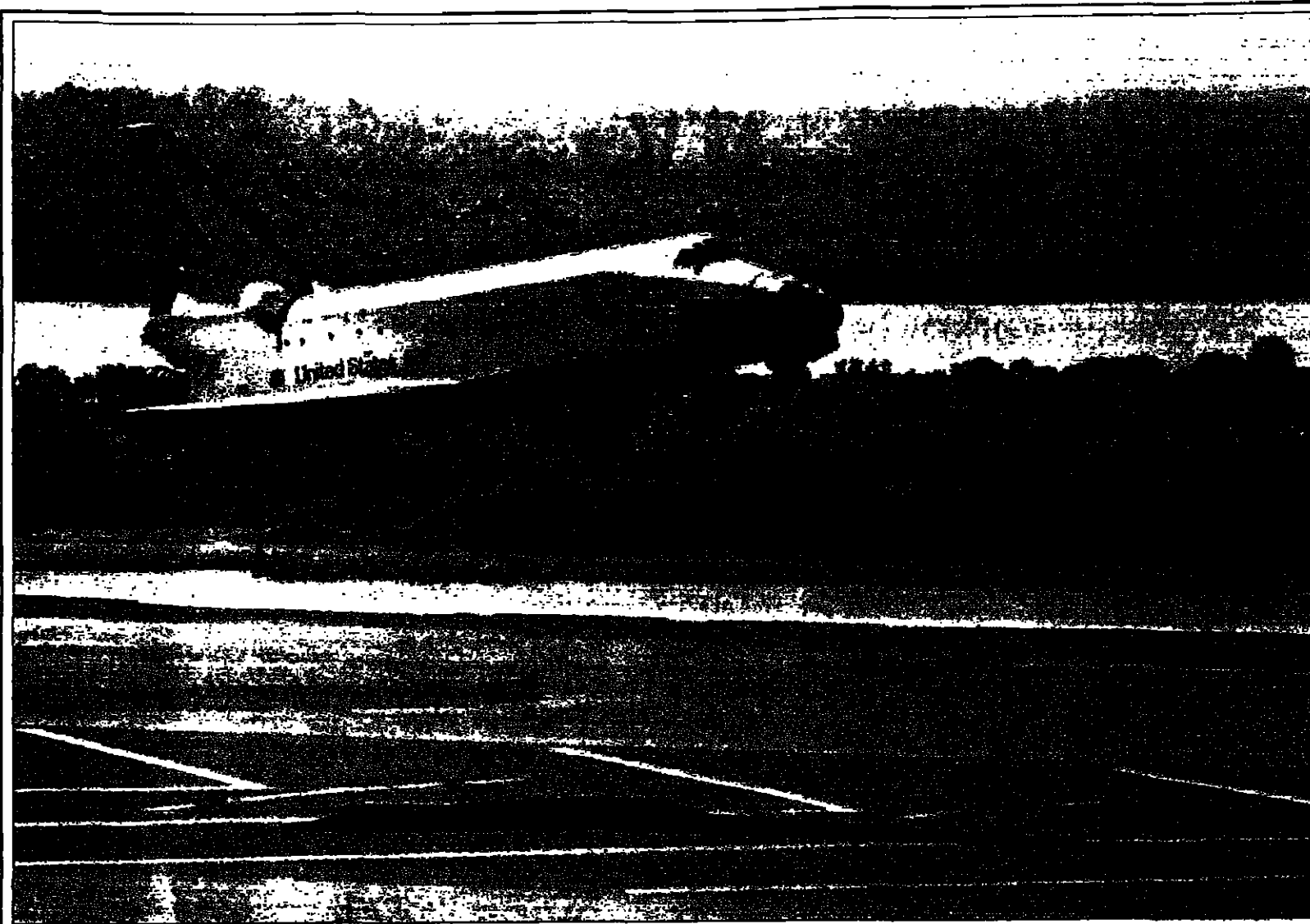
The summoning of the police official and Coptic bishop Saturday was in apparent attempt to reprimand both the police and the Coptic clergy who spoke out about the incident for projecting a negative image of the country.

On Saturday, Interior Minister Habib Al Adly summoned Major General Khalil Makhoul, head of the Sohag security force, to Cairo for an investigation into the incident, police officials said.

For his part, Pope Shenouda III summoned Bishop Wissa, a Coptic leader in Al Kuseh to Cairo, according to officials in the Sohag government who insisted on anonymity.

Wissa was briefly detained in October, after he complained to human rights groups about the incident, on grounds he allegedly incited unrest against the government.

He was released on a bail, but could still be tried for incitement, which carries a jail term of up to 25 years.



SHUTTLE BACK TO EARTH: The space shuttle Discovery angles towards touchdown at the Shuttle Landing Facility at the Kennedy Space Centre on Saturday, safely ending the 9-day scientific mission. The shuttle carried a crew of seven, including John Glenn, who flew his second mission into space after becoming the first American to orbit the Earth on his flight in the Friendship 7 Mercury capsule on Feb. 20, 1962 (Reuters photo)

Iraqi Kurd leader says Kurd federation hinges on dialogue with a 'free Iraq'

ANKARA (AP) — An Iraqi Kurdish leader said Saturday a proposed Kurdish federation in northern Iraq could be formed only through dialogue with a free Iraqi government.

A U.S.-backed deal in September that sealed a cease-fire between the two Iraqi Kurdish factions that control northern Iraq referred to a future federal authority for Kurds.

"That is the wish of our people," Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, told a news conference in Ankara.

"The Kurdish regional parliament in 1992 declared this principal vital."

However, he said, "this can only be implemented with the central government in Baghdad when there is free Iraq."

The reference to a federal structure for Kurds had angered Turkey. Turkey opposes creation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq, fearing it inspire Turkey's own Kurdish rebels in their fight for autonomy.

But Turkish leaders declared themselves reassured the plan would not

lead to creation of a Kurdish state after meeting with Barzani on Wednesday.

"We do not call for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state, nor have Americans encouraged us to do so, at all," Barzani said. "We know that this is not a realistic objective and we know the consequences of calling for an independent Kurdish state in this region."

Repeatedly throughout Kurdish history, Kurdish rebellions were crushed by forces of states in which they have lived. At present,

they are divided by five national borders.

"Therefore, really, we look for what is possible for our people under these circumstances," Barzani said.

He made no direct reference to President Saddam Hussein. Saddam rejected Kurds' 1992 call for a federal authority, saying Kurds should be satisfied with the limited autonomy he offered them in 1970.

Deputy Premier Bulent Ecevit said Wednesday that Barzani agreed that "any solution to northern Iraq has to be within the territo-

rial integrity of Iraq."

Under the September accord, Barzani and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan agreed to share power and hold elections in the de facto autonomous Kurdish zone in northern Iraq, set up after 1991 Gulf war.

Barzani said the elections were scheduled for July. Talabani also arrived in Ankara on Saturday and is expected to meet with Barzani on Sunday.

Barzani said they would discuss details of carrying out the accord.

UAE starts 1st ferry service to Iraq since 1990 Gulf war

DUBAI (AP) — A passenger and cargo ferry service to Iraq started Saturday, the first direct link between the Gulf and its sanctions-hit neighbour since the 1990 Gulf crisis.

The Jabal Ali 1, a luxury cruise ship that can carry 600 passengers, will travel from Dubai to the southern Iraqi port of Umm Al Qasr every Saturday, said Mohammad Hamdan Al Shamsi, manager of Naif Marine Services, a private company operating the service.

The ship, which can also carry 500 tonnes of cargo, will make the return trip to Dubai every Monday. Al Shamsi said the ferry will cater mostly to Shiite pilgrims and businessmen.

The 32-hour journey will cost 1,200 dirhams (\$329) for a two-way trip, considerably cheaper and quicker than the other option, travelling by air

to the Jordanian capital Amman, and then making the 1,000 kilometre road journey to Baghdad.

U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait bar flights to and from Iraq as well as other direct trade links.

The ferry has been approved by the United Nations. Only 70 passengers and a 45-man crew were on the ship for the maiden voyage, said Tarek Habeeb, Naif Marine Services assistant manager.

Most of the passengers were Iraqis visiting or working in Dubai. Others were the company's owners and members of the press.

"This is much easier than flying," said Sanaa Abdul Rahman, a pregnant Iraqi woman travelling with her five-year-old daughter, Ananas. She was visiting her husband who works in Dubai.

Al Shamsi said the ferry will also cater to passengers from

other countries in the region including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain. He said travel agents in those countries have made many inquiries.

Dozens have asked about the possibility of having the ferry stop at the Bahraini port of Manama en route to Iraq.

"If it's feasible, if they can guarantee at least 100 passengers, then we can do that in the future," Al Shamsi said.

About half of the passenger are expected to be Shiite Muslims who visit the shrines at Karbala and Najaf in southern Iraq. For Shiites, the sites are second only to the holy shrines of Saudi Arabia.

Diplomats in Baghdad have estimated that at least 25,000 Shiites visit Najaf and Karbala each month. Most Gulf states have sizeable Shiite minorities, but all are ruled by adherents to the mainstream Sunni sect.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinton and Glenn discover e-mail

WASHINGTON (AP) — Complete with exclamation points! and typographical errors, President Bill Clinton and John Glenn traded e-mail like chatty schoolboys trying a new toy. "This is certainly a first for me, writing to a president from space, and it may be a first for you in receiving an e-mail direct from an orbiting spacecraft," Glenn wrote Clinton from the space shuttle Discovery on Friday afternoon. "In any event, I want to personally thank you and Mrs. Clinton for coming to the Cape to see the launch. ... We have gone almost a third of the way around the world in the time it has taken me to write this letter, and the rest of the crew is waiting." The president, an admitted technodinosaur, donned his reading glasses and pecked at a Toshiba laptop to reply Saturday morning, hours before Discovery touched down at Cape Canaveral, Florida, after nine days in space. The president said he was "a little jealous" and told Glenn of asking an 83-year-old woman in Queens, New York, what she thought of the space mission. "She replied that it seemed like a perfectly fine thing for a young man like you to do!"

Saudi executed for murder

RIYADH (AP) — A Saudi man convicted of murder has been executed, the Al Riyadh newspaper reported Saturday. Abdullah Saud Al Shibani was beheaded Friday for shooting to death a fellow tribesman, Mohammad Badi Al Shibani, the paper said without elaborating. Al Shibani's execution in Riyadh raised to 23 the number of beheadings in the kingdom this year. Last year 124 people were executed. Saudi Arabia's Islamic courts impose the death sentence for murder, rape, drug trafficking and armed robbery. Executions are carried out with a sword in public. Human rights groups have criticised the executions, saying that suspects do not receive fair trials, are denied lawyers and do not have the right to appeal.

Bandits kill traveller at Istanbul roadblock

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Bandits in southeastern Turkey killed a traveller and robbed several others at a roadblock they erected Saturday, the Anatolia news agency reported. The bandits put up the barrier east of Mardin on the Syrian border, stopped a bus coming from Iskenderun on the Mediterranean coast, and robbed the passengers of all their valuables, before setting fire to the bus. They then shot and killed a passing motorcyclist who attempted to run the roadblock. Anatolia described the bandits as "terrorists," but did not use the label "separatist," used to denote members of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

Earthquake rocks northwestern Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — An earthquake measuring 4.7 degrees on the open-ended Richter scale hit northwestern Iran near the Turkish border on Saturday, according to the official news agency IRNA. The quake was recorded at 10:07 a.m. local time and its epicentre was 650 kilometres west of Tehran, the Geophysics Institute at Tehran University said. Iran is crossed by a number of fault-lines, making it one of the world's major earthquake zones, and several tremors were recorded last month.

Germany plans pensions for prostitutes

BONN (R) — German prostitutes may soon be able to claim full state pensions, unemployment benefit and other generally available employee rights, Germany's new Social Democrat family minister said. "We have the draft law, it's just a matter of introducing it to parliament now," said Christine Bergmann, responsible for family, women's and senior citizens' affairs. Bergmann, a strong advocate of sexual equality and improved women's rights, said that while prostitutes were not illegal in Germany, their standing under German law was very weak.

Douglas sought inspiration in his own life

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kirk Douglas need look no farther than his own life for his role in "Sunset Boulevard." Douglas, 81, suffering a stroke two years ago and will play a stroke victim when filming begins next week in Reno, Nevada. "I think it will be difficult to play," joked Douglas, who rejected the idea of playing an Alzheimer patient in the film. Douglas's character was once a prizefighter. Flashback scenes will be taken from "Champion," for which Douglas won a 1949 Oscar nomination. Douglas lost his speech after the 1952 stroke, but it returned after long hours of therapy.

Puff Daddy's birthday bash draws stars

NEW YORK (AP) — Puff Daddy celebrated his 29th birthday with about 1,000 of his closest friends, while 200 more guests were left shivering on the sidewalk after fire marshals reduced the room capacity earlier in the day. Clive Davis, head of Arista Records, was among the invited revellers Wednesday night until security was tightened by Russell Simmons, head of Def Jam Records. "That's Puffy's boss," Penny Marshall sang the Happy Birthday song to Puff Daddy, whose real name is Sean Combs, while Donald Trump's two ex-wives — Ivana Trump and Maria Maples — eyed each other icily.

Powell unveils 'GI Joe' toy in his likeness

NEW YORK (AFP) — A "GI Joe" doll in the image of retired general Colin Powell, the popular former chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, has been created by the maker of the action figure, with part of the proceeds going to charity. "It's an honour and a thrill to be part of a classic American toy line like GI Joe," said Powell told a gathering of the Boys and Girls Club in New York this week. Part of the proceeds from sales of the Powell look-alike toy will be donated to the club, a charity on which Powell serves on the board of governors.

Bungling burglars videoed themselves

LONDON (AFP) — Two burglars videoed themselves breaking into homes, professionally editing the tapes with credits, title and soundtracks so they could show off to friends. Sometimes they set fire to the properties, sometimes they just contented themselves with wrecking what they could find, or stealing goods. But unfortunately for them, their keenest audience was at the local police station. Amazed detectives watched incriminating scenes of arson and burglary, then footage of the pair boasting about their crimes, after seizing the tapes in a search at one of the burglars' homes.

Empty U.S. threats weaken negotiations with Iraq, former U.S. secretaries warn

ATLANTA (AFP) — Too many unfulfilled threats to punish Iraqi President Saddam Hussein have weakened the U.S. ability to negotiate with Baghdad, a group of former U.S. secretaries of defence said at a conference here.

The former secretaries — largely defence hawks from previous Republican administrations — gathered to advocate a more virile U.S. foreign policy at a conference Friday sponsored by the Atlanta-based Southern Centre for International Studies.

Taking part were Frank Carlucci, defence secretary from 1987 to 1989 under

presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush; his predecessor Casper Weinberger, defence secretary from 1981 to 1987; and James Schlesinger, defence secretary from 1973 to 1975 under presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Also present was William Perry, defence secretary from 1994 to 1997 under President Bill Clinton, the only former defence secretary at the conference who had served a Democratic administration.

"We have a naval task force assembled, but we don't use it [against Iraq]," Weinberger complained during his presentation. "Every

time we make a threat and don't carry it out, we encourage [Saddam Hussein]."

Schlesinger focused on the Iraqi leader as the source of problems in the region.

"Unless we can take out Saddam Hussein, we are going to have to live with Saddam Hussein [for a long time]," Schlesinger said, noting, however, that the countries of the region "don't want us to attack Iraq."

"We keep getting waved off," he said.

Perry, who oversaw punitive bombings of Iraq during his tenure, noted the limited effect of a bombing campaign. "We bombed for

months and couldn't get him out," Perry said.

Carlucci was unimpressed. "Our credibility has eroded because of empty threats," he snapped.

Also at the meeting was Donald Rumsfeld, defence secretary from 1975 to 1977 under President Gerald Ford. Rumsfeld focused his talk on how the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty continues to prevent the United States from developing defences against ballistic missiles.

Emerging ballistic missile countries such as North Korea could have the capability of striking the continental United States within

three to five years — and the current U.S. defence is not prepared to deal with the threat, Rumsfeld warned.

"The genie is out of the bottle," Rumsfeld said. "We can't live alone on this continent. Other nations are capable of imposing great damage."

The answer is "to recognise this reality and invest in defence," he said, concluding that the United States needs to either "depart" or "renegotiate" the 1972 ABM treaty.

Weinberger agreed. "We need to step out of the ABM treaty and not ask if everything we do is treaty compliant," he said.

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